

**ISLAMIC REFORM:  
THE CONFLICT BETWEEN  
THE TRADITIONALISTS AND REFORMISTS  
CONCERNING MATTERS OF *'IBĀDAH*  
IN CONTEMPORARY MALAYSIA**

**BY**

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MAY 2004**



IN THE NAME OF *ALLĀH*  
THE COMPASSIONATE, THE MERCIFUL

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SAADAN MAN



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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in matters of *‘ibādah* as a result of the emergence of Islamic reform in Malaysia. This thesis is divided into three major parts. Part One highlights the phenomenon of Islamic reform in general and its emergence and development in Malaysia, while Part Two focuses on the general concept of *‘ibādah*. Part Three serves as the most significant part of this study as it highlights the contents of the conflict and its analysis.

Part One is divided into two chapters. Chapter One provides an introduction dealing with the notion and terminology of Islamic reform, its brief historical development and some of its basic principles. It provides a basis for an understanding of the development of Islamic reform in Malaysia. Chapter Two reveals the background of the Malay Muslim community which has been an important factor that contributed to the advent of Islamic reform in Malaysia. It then discusses briefly the historical development of Islamic reform in Malaysia from its early days of emergence until the present day. The basic ideas which contributed to the growth of the conflict which involved the traditionalists and the reformists are also studied in this chapter.

Part Two comprises one chapter, i.e. Chapter Three. This chapter turns to the subject of the conflict, viz. *‘ibādah*. It explores the basic idea of *‘ibādah*, its concept, principles, relationship with the past forms of *‘ibādah*, its system and status in Islam. This chapter provides a basis for further understanding of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists discussed in the next chapters.

Part Three consists of two chapters, i.e. Chapter Four and Chapter Five. Chapter Four reveals in detail the content of the conflict between the two rivals in the realm of *‘ibādah*. It explores their respective standpoints as well as their argumentations on specific disputed issues. Chapter Five analyses the conflict between the two parties by studying the major reasons for the conflict and its impact upon the Malay Muslim community. It also views the future of conflict and suggests possible formulas in managing the conflict.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	v
NOTES ON transliteration AND SPELLING.....	ix
INTRODUCTION .....	xi
<b>PART ONE: ISLAMIC REFORM</b>	
<b>CHAPTER ONE: ISLAMIC REFORM: AN OVERVIEW</b>	
Introduction.....	1
The Concept of Islamic Reform and Its Terms.....	2
The Origin of Islamic Reform.....	12
The Ideology and Method of Islamic Reform.....	19
The Doctrinal Principles of Islamic Reformism	
The Return to First Principles:	
The Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.....	22
The Qur'ān.....	23
The Sunnah.....	26
The Promotion of <i>Ijtihād</i> and Rejection of <i>Taqlīd</i> .....	29
The Encouragement of <i>Ittibāʿ</i> and Condemnation of <i>Ibtidāʿ</i> .....	32
<b>CHAPTER TWO: ISLAMIC REFORM IN MALAYSIA</b>	
Islamic Reformism in Malaysia: A Background Review.....	36
The Legacy of Islamic Traditionalism.....	36
The Role of Islam in Traditional Malay Society.....	37
The Nature of Islamic Traditionalism.....	40
The Role of the Religious Establishment.....	46
The Impact of Colonialism.....	49
The Emergence of Islamic Reformism in Malaysia.....	56
Islamic Reformism in the Pre-Independence Era.....	56
Islamic Reformism in the Post-Independence Era.....	68
Islamic Reformism: The Islamic Resurgence	
and The <i>Dakwah</i> Movement.....	70
ABIM.....	77

PAS.....	78
DARUL ARQAM.....	80
JAMAAT TABLIGH.....	82
JAMAAH ISLAH MALAYSIA (JIM).....	84
The UMNO and the Government's Policy of Islamization.....	86
 <b>PART TWO: 'IBĀDAH</b>	
<b>CHAPTER THREE: THE ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF 'IBĀDAH</b>	
The Concept of 'Ibādah	
The Lexical Meaning of 'Ibādah.....	94
The Concept of 'Ibādah in Islamic Literature.....	96
'Ibādah in the Qur'ān.....	103
The Status and Significance of 'Ibādah in Islam.....	106
The Relationship Between 'Ibādah, Islam, Īmān and Iḥsān.....	109
Some Aspects of 'Ibādah in the Period of Jāhiliyyah.....	112
The Vestiges of the Religion of Abraham ( <i>Dīn Ḥanīf</i> ).....	113
<i>Taḥannuth</i> .....	116
Idolatry	
The Origin of Idolatry.....	119
Idolatrous Worship in the Period of Jāhiliyyah.....	122
The Islamic System of 'Ibādah .....	132
'Ibādah: Obligatory and Supererogatory.....	133
'Ibādah in the System of Islam.....	136
The Simple Classification of 'Ibādāt.....	139
 <b>PART THREE: THE CONFLICT</b>	
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: CONFLICT REGARDING 'IBĀDAH</b>	
The Traditionalists and Reformists' Perceptions of 'Ibādah	
Perceptions Regarding The <i>Shahādah</i> .....	141
Perceptions Regarding Matters of Prayer.....	144
Nullity of Ablution: Touching ( <i>Mulāmasah</i> ).....	144
Recitations Of Certain Prayers Before <i>Adhān</i> .....	150
The Utterance of Intention ( <i>Talaffuz bi Niyyah</i> ).....	153
Pronouncing the <i>Basmalah</i> Before Reciting	

<i>Sūrat al-Fātiḥah</i> .....	158
The Recitation of <i>Qunūt</i> in the Fajr Prayer.....	161
<i>Dhikr</i> and <i>Du‘ā’</i> After the Prayer.....	169
Matters Concerning the Friday Congregational Prayer	
Doing the <i>Adḥān</i> Twice.....	179
Performing the <i>Sunnah Qabliyyah</i> Prayer.....	182
Matters Regarding <i>Zakāh</i> (Almsgiving) of Property	
The Expansion of <i>Zakāh</i> Resources.....	186
<i>Zakāh</i> of Agriculture Produce.....	190
<i>Zakāh</i> of Salary or Professional Income.....	194
Matters Regarding Fasting ( <i>Ṣiyām</i> ) of Ramaḍān	
Confirmation of the Beginning of Ramaḍān	
by <i>Ru’yah</i> and <i>Hisāb</i> Methods.....	199
The Prayer of Ramaḍān Nights ( <i>Ṣalāt al-Tarāwīḥ</i> ).....	206
Recitation of the Qur’ān in <i>Tarāwīḥ</i> Prayers.....	207
Chanting the <i>Dhikrs</i> and <i>Ṣalawāt</i>	
between the Prayers.....	209
The <i>Ḥajj</i> (Pilgrimage).....	215
The <i>Miqāt al-Makānī</i> .....	215
<i>Tawāf al-Ifāḍah</i> for the <i>Qārin</i> .....	217
Matters Related to the Deceased.....	224
The <i>Talqīn</i> After Burial.....	225
Contributing to the Reward of the Deceased.....	228
Making Up the Deceased’s Missed Obligatory	
Actions.....	230
The <i>Tahlīl</i> Ceremony and <i>Kenduri</i>	
<i>Arwah</i> (Feast of the Deceased).....	238

## CHAPTER FIVE: THE CONFLICT OVER ‘IBĀDAH: AN ANALYSIS

Reasons for the Conflict.....	248
Different Perceptions Regarding the Concept of <i>Bid‘ah</i> .....	249
<i>Bid‘ah Ḥasanah</i> and <i>Bid‘ah Ḍalālāh</i> .....	254
Classification of <i>Bid‘ah</i> .....	261
Perceptions Regarding the Concept of <i>Taqlīd</i> of a <i>Madhhab</i>	

and the Need of <i>Ijtihād</i> .....	265
The Permissibility of <i>Taqlīd</i> .....	268
<i>Taqlīd</i> and <i>Ittibāʿ</i> .....	273
Holding to a Specific <i>Madhhab</i> .....	280
Lack of Tolerance over Disputed Matters.....	287
Impact of Conflict.....	294
Future Prospects.....	306
Islamic Reformism and Traditionalism in	
Current Islamic Resurgence.....	306
Managing the Conflict.....	311
<b>CONCLUSIONS</b> .....	318
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b> .....	334

## NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND SPELLING

This study involves the use of Arabic and Malay words for which a general system of transliteration and spelling need to be devised. In the absence of a standard form for the spelling of various Arabic and Malay terms, some inconsistencies are unavoidable. The researcher, however, has decided, for the sake of convenience and to a certain extent uniformity, to adopt the following rules in dealing with these spellings:

### Arabic/Islamic Terms

In this case, a modified version of the Encyclopaedia of Islam's system of transliteration as used by the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Edinburgh is adopted, except that words ending in *tā' marbūṭah* are spelt with 'h', for example:

*Bidʿah* and not *Bidʿa*

*Qiblah* and not *Qibla*

*Sharḥ* and not *Sharḥa*

As for Arabic words, generally these have been quoted in an Arabic transliteration rather than the Malay version. For instance:

*ʿIbādah* and not *Ibadah*

*Ṣūfī* and not *Sufi*

*ʿĀlim/ʿUlamāʾ* and not *Alim/Ulamak*

In another case, Shaykh al-Islam is spelt as in Arabic contexts, not as Shaykhul Islam, while Qāḍī (religious judge) is spelt in this way rather than Kathi or Kadi.

Exception, however, is made for words which are popularly used in Malay, where even though they are originally Arabic, the local usage is adopted. For example:

*Adat* rather than *ʿĀḍāt*

*Dakwah* and not *Daʿwah*

*Hijaz* and not *Ḥijāz*

## Malay Words

Since the standardization of Malay spelling took place only a few decades ago, the new Malay spelling system is only used in recent and contemporary works. However, with regard to the particular names where the old method way of spelling were used, the Malay spelling used in this study is as found in the original sources. For instances:

*Neracha* and not *Neraca*

*Bahtra* and not *Bahtera*

*Pilehan Timoer* and not *Pilihan Timur*

## Names of Malays and Local Muslims

For names of local Muslims and other personalities known locally, even though they were Arabic, the spelling used is according to local usages. For example:

Abdullah and not ‘Abd Allāh

Daud Fatani and not Dāwūd al-Faṭānī

Muhammad Arshad Banjari and not Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī

## Names of Middle Eastern Muslims

Names of such persons, despite the fact that some of them are known locally, are spelt with the proper diacritical marks as often as used in academic works. This exemption is made since the names are exclusively Middle Eastern. For example:

Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī and not Jamaluddin al-Afghani

Ḥasan al-Bannā and not Hasan al-Banna

Rashīd Riḍā and not Rashid Redha or Rashid Rida.



# INTRODUCTION

## BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Islamic reform has long been an entrenched and significant tradition in the Muslim historical experience. In the contemporary Islamic resurgence which prevails in the Muslim world, Islamic reform plays its dominant role. From the early days of Islam, Islamic reform has emerged in various forms depending on the changing circumstances of the Muslim community. However, in all these circumstances, Islamic reform has always stressed on the need to return to the first principle of Islam, namely the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Islamic reform is a response from within the Muslim community to their state of backwardness and decadence caused mainly by their departure from the straight path of Islam. In the modern era, Islamic reform, which was pioneered by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Rashīd Riḍā and Ḥasan al-Bannā, marks a response both to an internal decline of the community as well as to Western colonialism. In reversing the internal decline and countering Western colonialism, they called upon the Muslim community to return to the spirit of early Islam and to reinterpret the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet in the light of modern times. They believed that limited borrowing from Western ideas was permissible and that reason could not conflict with religious revelation.

The spirit of Islamic reform which spread prevalently in the Middle East extended its influence to all over the Muslim world, from Indonesia in the East, to Senegal in the West. As a Muslim country, Malaysia without exception has also been much influenced by the prevalent spirit of Islamic reform. The growth of Islamic reform in Malaysia had commenced since the early twentieth century, pioneered by some leading figures such as Syed Sheikh Al-Hadi, Syeikh Tahir Jalaluddin and Abbas Muhammad Taha. The advent of Islamic reform in Malaysia has resulted in various effects in the history of the Malay Muslim community. One of its greatest impacts has been the conflict of thought between the advocates of Islamic reformism, i.e. the reformists, and their adversaries, i.e. the traditionalists, as both parties hold firmly

to their opposing views with regard to certain issues in practising the religion. The conflict of thought between the two parties occurred in various domains of the religion, including faith as well as politics. Among them, the conflicting thought regarding the matters of *‘ibādah* has been an important one and is regarded as a microcosm of the general conflict between both parties.

Basically, the conflicting perceptions between the traditionalists and the reformists with regard to matters of *‘ibādah* is a juristic one. This conflict resembles the disagreements between the previous jurists in the established four *Sunnī madhhabs*, namely, the Ḥanafī, the Mālikī, the Shāfi‘ī and the Ḥanbalī. Disagreements between the jurists of the *madhhabs* were the results of their differences in methods of inferring the rulings (*qawā'id al-istinbāṭ*) from the primary textual evidences, i.e. the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muḥammad, as well as their differences in the methods of *ijtihād*. However, the disputes between the traditionalists and the reformists do not revolve around the question of different methodologies very much, but rather the question of authority.

The traditionalists strongly hold to the authority of the past and thus adopt the principle of *taqlīd* in practising the religion and refuse to perform *ijtihād*. The reformists, while recognizing the authority of the past, denounce *taqlīd*, and instead, hold to the principle of *ittibāṣ* and emphasize the authority of *ijtihād*. The reformists, though they strongly place great importance on the need for *ijtihād* in resolving modern day problems, do not propound a new methodology (*manhaj*) of *ijtihād*, but adopt the existing methodologies recognized by the *Sunnī madhhabs*. For instance, the conflict between the two rivals occurs when the traditionalists in adopting the principle of *taqlīd* hold to one specific *madhhab*, i.e. the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab*, while the reformists do not restrict themselves to any specific *madhhab*, but choose from the strongest and the best standpoint of these *madhhabs*, or perform new *ijtihād*.

The sources of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in matters of *‘ibādah* are varied, but mostly result from the different principles held by the respective groups with regard to several issues relating to the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), particularly the issues of *ijtihād* and its antithesis, *taqlīd*. Though the conflict is mainly manifested in a juristic form which does not

involve any of the fundamental principles of the religion, it frequently leads to a serious division of the Malay Muslim community. In such a case, the question of attitude is apparently relevant.

## THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study attempts to analyse the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists as a major result of the advent of Islamic reform in Malaysia. For that purpose, this study will examine the notion and principles of Islamic reform itself which has been the point of departure of the study of this conflict.

This study also aims at revealing the aspects of conflicting thought between the two rivals with regard to matters of *‘ibāḍah*. In doing so, it will explore in detail the argumentations about the disputed matters, and at the same time will try to identify the major reasons that engender the conflict. Generally, the conflict over the issues of *‘ibāḍah* represents the whole conflict between the two groups. Thus, the study is important in terms of its findings with regard to the sources of the conflict, and it is hoped that it will provide an insight to better understand the conflict between the Malay traditionalists and reformists.

The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists concerning matters of *‘ibāḍah* has had a tremendous impact upon the Malay Muslim community. On the one hand, one might say that the conflict has generated a negative impact upon the society, but, on the other, it has engendered several positive effects. It has been an important objective of this study to examine the major effects of the conflict on the Malay Muslim community.

Since the conflict between the two groups has obviously left some negative effects on the Malay Muslim community, particularly in causing the divide within the society, the study further attempts to formulate some possible ways of reconciling the two opposing parties. The study will additionally attempt to investigate the influence and extent of Islamic traditionalism and Islamic reformism as two major religious streams in the current Islamic resurgence in Malaysia. The knowledge gained could be used to make an assessment about the future development of the conflict and perhaps

may assist in prescribing the right course of action.

## THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study encompasses two basic discussions: Islamic reform in Malaysia and the conflicting schools of thought on issues of *‘ibādah*. The discussion of Islamic reform in Malaysia will focus on the general notion and principle of Islamic reform. A brief historical development of Islamic reform is included to provide a basis for understanding the phenomenon in the Malaysian context. In discussing Islamic reform in the Malaysian context, the study covers the background of its emergence, and its historical development in the Malay society, which is divided into two phases: before independence, i.e from early 1900s to 1957, and after independence, i.e from 1958 until the present day. This is important for understanding the background of the conflict.

This study of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists is confined to matters of *‘ibādah*. In doing so, the Islamic concept of *‘ibādah* is significantly discussed. The conflict between the two groups in matters of *‘ibādah* covers a wide range of issues, but this study is limited to the disputed matters in the five pillars of Islam and some supererogatory acts of *‘ibādah* which are important to the discussion.

As the conflict over issues of *‘ibādah* is a juristic one, it closely relates to the discussion of specific questions in the science of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). Hence, in discovering the sources of the conflict, this study focuses its discussion on several important topics of *uṣūl al-fiqh*, such as the notions of *taqlīd* and *ijtihād*.

## A BRIEF SURVEY OF MAJOR SOURCES

Basically, works on Islamic reform in Malaysia are considerable, but none has done an in-depth study of the conflict over matters of *‘ibādah* between the traditionalists and the reformists as this study attempts to do. Thus, this study relies mostly on scattered materials written by both opposing groups or referred to by them in the related

disputed matters. These include both classical and contemporary sources.

The discussion on general Islamic reform and its relevant issues is based on the abundant references which are mostly written in English. On the general concept of Islamic reform and its manifestation in the contemporary Muslim world, the significant references include, for instance, Rashīd Riḍā's writings in his *Tafsīr al-Manār*; several writings of Fazlur Rahman, such as in his books *Islam* and *Islam and Modernity*, and his articles "Revival and Reform in Islam"; Ali Merad's essay "Islāḥ"; John L. Esposito's writings, such as in his *Islam the Straight Path*, *Islam and Politics*, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality* and his edited book *Voices of Resurgent Islam*; C. C. Adams' *Islamic Modernism in Egypt*, Malcom H. Kerr's *Islamic Reform*; H. A. R. Gibb's *Modern Trends in Islam*; R. Hrair Dekmejian's *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, Andrew Rippin's *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (vol 2); Patrick Bannerman's *Islam in Perspective* and so forth. These writings provide the general outline of Islamic reform and describe its emergence in various forms in modern times.

The discussion on Islamic reform in Malaysia and its historical development is based on various writings. Among them are William R. Roff's oft-quoted book *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, his edited book *Kelantan: Religion and Society* and his numerous articles, especially "Kaum Muda and Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction amongst the Malays"; Mohd Sarim Mustajab's writing "Gerakan Islah Islamiah di Tanah Melayu 1906-1940"; Ibrahim Abu Bakar's *Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life and Thought of Sayid Shekh Al-Hadi 1867-1934*; Abu Bakar Hamzah's *Al-Imam: Its Role in Malay Society 1906-1908*; Alijah Gordon's edited book *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hady*, etc. On its contemporary development it refers to several writings such as *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics* and *Islam in Malaysia from Revivalism to Islamic State* of Hussin Mutalib; *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia* by Chandra Muzaffar, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia* by Abdul Rahman Abdullah, and various works of current observers of Malaysian Islamic resurgence, such as the works of Judith Nagata, N. J. Funston, Fred Von Der Mehden and Clive S. Kessler.

On the conflict over matters of *'ibādah*, this study refers mainly to the various *fiqh* writings which have been the important references of both groups. They include the classical Malay Muslim literature of *fiqh*, such as Dawud Fatani's works of *Bughyat*

*al-Tullāb* and *Furūf al-Masā'il*, Muhammad Arshad Banjari's *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn* and Muhammad b. Ismail Fatani's *Maṭlaf al-Badrayn* which have been the most important texts of *fiqh* referred to by the traditionalists. The contemporary works of *fiqh* in the native language, written in the form of question and answer, such as K.H. Sirajuddin Abbas' *40 Masalah Agama*, Syed Alwi al-Haddad's *Fatwa Mufti Johor*, Hasan Bandung's *Soal Jawab* and Hashim A. Ghani's *Gelanggang Soal Jawab* are among the significant references. The Arabic classical primary *fiqh* literature of the four leading *Sunni madhhabs* has also been an essential reference as they are frequently quoted in both argumentations of the two rivals. The reform- oriented *fiqh* works, such as Muḥammad 'Alī al-Shawkani's *Nayl al-Awtār*, Sayyid Sābiq's *Fiqh al-Sunnah* and Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī's *Fatāwā Mu'āṣirah* have also been frequently referred to.

In clarifying the reasons for the conflict, in addition to the abovementioned works, the classical works of Dawud Fatani's *al-Jawāhir al-Saniyyah*, Abu Bakar Ashaari's writings such as *Pembasmi Taqlid* and *Ibadah Rasulullah*, and the contemporary works such as Wan Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah's *Penutup Perdebatan Islam Alaf Kedua di Dunia Melayu*, Ahmad Yusuf Amin's works of *Bid'ah* and *Taqīd*, Basri Ibrahim's *Khilafiah*, *Bid'ah dan Masalah Umum*, Moenawar Chalil's *Kembali Kepada al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah* are also among the important sources.

In referring to the verses of the Qur'ān in this study, the translations provided by Yusuf Ali, M. M. Pickthall and Dr. Muhammad Taqī-ud-Din al-Hilālī & Dr. Muḥammad Muḥsin Khān are specifically used. In quoting the *ḥadīths* of the Prophet, the writer refers mainly to the six books of prophetic traditions (*sunan sittah*) compiled by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad. For ease in finding the specific *ḥadīths*, the writer frequently uses the index of traditions available in the CD-ROMs of the *Mawsū'at al-Ḥadīth al-Nabawiyyah* published by The Ṣakhr Corporation in 1996 and *The Islamic Scholars* published by Par Excellence Software in 1996. In referring to the *ḥadīths* in these CD-ROMs, the name of the *ḥadīth* book is mentioned first, followed by the title of the chapter and the number of the *ḥadīth*.



# CHAPTER 1

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## ISLAMIC REFORM: AN OVERVIEW

### Introduction

In modern writings of Islam, there are a wide range of terms used in characterizing the heightening of Islamic consciousness among the Muslim community. The terms used are such as Islamic reassertion, reaffirmation, awakening, resurgence, renewal, renaissance, revitalization, rebirth, Islamic reformism, revivalism, puritanism, modernism, fundamentalism, activism, the return to Islam, the march of Islam and so forth. Though some of these terms may share common meanings, they may respectively be used in different contexts to denote different types of Islamic phenomena.<sup>1</sup> In Arabic usage there are also several terms which illustrate such Islamic phenomena.<sup>2</sup> One of the great concepts in the Islamic vocabulary of resurgence is *islāḥ*. *Islāḥ* is a phenomenon that is frequently referred to in modern Islamic literature as Islamic reform.<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will initially attempt to elucidate the general notion of Islamic

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<sup>1</sup>See R. Hrair Dekmajian, *Islam in Revolution, Fundamentalism in the Arab World* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1985), p. 4; James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-State* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1986), p. 24; Patrick Bannerman, *Islam in Perspective A Guide to Islamic Society, Politics and Law* (London: Routledge for The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1987), p. 155; John L. Esposito, "Islam and Muslim Politics," in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 3; Chandra Muzaffar, "Islamic Resurgence: A Global View," in Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (eds.) *Islam and Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 5-6.

<sup>2</sup>Among the popular Arabic terms used to indicate the Islamic resurgence are, for instance, *al-bāṭh al-Islāmī* (Islamic renaissance), *al-tajdīd* (renewal), *al-ṣaḥwat al-Islāmiyyah* (Islamic resurgence), *al-uṣūliyyat al-Islāmiyyah* (Islamic fundamentalism), *al-nahḍah* (revival) etc. See Dekmajian, *Islam in Revolution*, op.cit., pp. 4-5; John L. Esposito, "Islam and Muslim Politics," op.cit., p. 13; Cf. Hassan Saab, "The Spirit Of Reform In Islam", in *Islamic Studies*, 2: 1, March 1963, p. 18.

<sup>3</sup>See A. Merad, "Islāḥ", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam* (new edition), vol. IV, p. 141; Hassan Saab, "The Spirit Of Reform In Islam", op.cit., p. 17

reform and some terms which are significantly relevant in this study. It will then extend the discussion on several important issues pertaining to the sources, characteristic, orientation, and fundamental principles of Islamic reform.

## The Concept of Islamic Reform

Reform, as stated by Hassan Saab, suggests change in form rather than substance.<sup>4</sup> To reform is "to make or become better by the removal of faults and errors."<sup>5</sup> In Arabic, the term "*islāḥ*" has been the word generally used by scholars for "reform." *Islāḥ* derives from *aslaḥa* which means "to correct, to redress or to purify from corruption."<sup>6</sup> It corresponds to the meaning of the term "reform," which is "removal of faults or abuses." Islamic reform thus signifies efforts of restoration and purification of Islam from un-Islamic accretions to its pristine form.

The concept of reform (*islāḥ*) is a fundamental and deeply-rooted component of Islam's world-view. It has played an important part in the history of the Muslim community. From its earliest days, Islam has possessed a tradition of reform. This tradition lays special emphasis on the need for purification and revival by returning to the basic principles of Islam, in rectifying the social and moral decline of the community.<sup>7</sup> It is believed that the fundamental failure of the community resulted from its departure from true Islam. Thus, its revitalization can be only achieved by returning to the straight path of Islam. Islamic reform reflects a continuing tradition of revitalization of Islamic faith and practice within the historic communities of

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<sup>4</sup>Hassan Saab, "The Spirit of Reform," op.cit., p. 17.

<sup>5</sup>See *The Oxford Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 9<sup>th</sup> Edition), p. 1154.

<sup>6</sup>See Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, 1955), vol. 2, pp. 516-517; Hans Wehr, *Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (London: MacDonalds and Evans, 1961), pp. 522-523.

<sup>7</sup>See Fazlur Rahman, "Revival And Reform In Islam," in P.M. Holt, Ann K.S. Lambton and Bernard Lewis (eds.) *The Cambridge History of Islam* (vol. 2), *The Further Islamic Lands, Islamic Society and Civilization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp. 632-633; John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*," op.cit., p. 32; John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path* (Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, expanded ed.), p. 115.



Muslims. Over the centuries the efforts at reform have taken many different forms shaped by the special conditions of time and place. Over time, the specific meanings of reform might have changed depending on the evolution of Islamic thought and the changing circumstances of the Muslim community. However, in changing circumstances and with different implications, Islamic reform has always involved a call for a return to the basic fundamentals of Islam as presented in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.<sup>8</sup>

Islamic reform in its various forms and terms is used in modern Islamic literature as antithesis of the term Islamic traditionalism or Islamic conservatism.<sup>9</sup> Traditionalism is often used interchangeably with conservatism in referring to a tendency to cling to an old way of life. It is a reaction against deliberate reforming tendencies and characterized by almost fear of innovation.<sup>10</sup> Islamic traditionalism or Islamic conservatism, as Andrew Rippin points out, maintains allegiance to past methods and has not dealt with the threat and attraction of the West. In this context, R. Hrair Dekmejian simply defines the traditionalists as those who "cling to traditional Islamic precepts and reject Western and other influences."<sup>11</sup> William Shepard provides a more detailed description about the traditionalists. He asserts that a traditionalist is "one whose allegiance is to what many would consider the particular 'mix' of

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<sup>8</sup>John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*," op.cit., pp. 32-33; Hassan Saab, "The Spirit of Reform," op.cit., p. 18.

<sup>9</sup>In modern writings of Islam, scholars commonly categorize the Muslim thought and their approaches towards modernity and into several classifications, such as the traditionalist, the reformist and the modernist. Some scholars use simple classifications, while some others use a more complex categorization, depending on their different value of judgements. On this classification, see for example, William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 19 (1987), pp. 307-326; John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1984), pp. 216-218; Andrew Rippin, *Muslims Their Religious Beliefs and Practices* (Volume 2): *The Contemporary Period* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 34-40; Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," op.cit., pp. 632-636; idem, "Islamic Modernism: Its Scope, Method and Alternatives," in *International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 4 (1970), pp. 317-333; idem, *Islam* (Chicago & New York: University of Chicago Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1979), in chapters 12-14; R. Hrair Dekmajian, *Islam in Revolution, Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, op.cit., pp. 68-75; Patrick Bannerman, *Islam in Perspective*, op.cit., pp. 11-15.

<sup>10</sup>Karl Mannheim, "Conservative Thought," in K. Mannheim, *Essays on Sociology and Socio Psychology* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966), pp. 95-96.

<sup>11</sup>R. H. Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, op.cit., p. 21.

Sharī'ah and non-Sharī'ah elements characterizing his area on the eve of Western impact, and who has not significantly internalized the Western challenge, that is, who has not felt the attraction as well as the threat of Western ways, and thus has not fully appreciated the depth of the threat. He will probably be more 'otherworldly' and more given to traditional 'superstitions'."<sup>12</sup>

The basic orientation of traditionalism, according to Hisham Sharabi, is historicism, to use the term in a purely descriptive sense: that is, it derives its inspiration and strength from a historically evolved tradition and in its intellectual attitude always assumes a backward looking stance.<sup>13</sup> It is obvious, then, that the traditionalists hold to the full authority of the past and that change should not and does not affect the traditions of the past.<sup>14</sup> For the traditionalists, the past, rather than the future, was the locus of the Golden Age. The past was restorable and one day will be restored. The traditionalist thought, though it may not whole heartedly espouse the status quo, does not repudiate it. As the only concrete reality, the established order represents continuity and the only link with the past.<sup>15</sup> The traditionalist group contains within it many learned scholars (*'ulamā'*) and the traditional elites who might be thought to have a vested interest in maintaining the status quo, many of the mystically oriented Ṣūfī groups, the lower classes, especially the peasants, and the vast majority of those who have not been exposed to modern education and thus to a great extent have not experienced the challenge of modernity to such a degree as to consider it a personal problem.<sup>16</sup>

Having briefly explained the notion of Islamic traditionalism, we shall now clarify some terms used to denote Islamic reform. The most popular term used in

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<sup>12</sup>William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," op.cit., p. 318.

<sup>13</sup>See Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West: The Formative Years 1875-1914* (Baltimore & London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1970), p. 6.

<sup>14</sup>Andrew Rippin, *Muslims Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, op.cit., p. 29.

<sup>15</sup>Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West*, op.cit., p. 6.

<sup>16</sup>See Andrew Rippin, *Muslims Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, op.cit., p. 29; William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," op.cit., p. 318.

antithesis to Islamic traditionalism is Islamic reformism. Islamic reformism has been a general term used to denote the Islamic ideology of reform. Those who uphold the ideas of reform are called reformists. In contemporary Islamic literature, Islamic reformism is specifically used to indicate the pre-modern revivalism and pre-modernist reform movements which swept over the larger part of the Muslim world during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. These include the revival efforts of Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and the reform movements led by Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792) in Arabia, Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) in Nigeria, the Grand Sanusi (1787-1859) in Libya, Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) and Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762) in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>17</sup> However, in referring to this pre-modern Islamic reformism, the scholars, in some writings, tend to preserve the terms pre-modern revivalism, pre-modern reformism or pre-modernist reformism rather than Islamic reformism.

Islamic reformism is sometimes used to indicate the modern reform movement which is different from Islamic modernism. This will be mentioned after discussing Islamic modernism itself. Islamic modernism refers generally to the modern reform movements especially those which emerged in the twentieth century. Islamic modernism, according to Charles C. Adams, constitutes an attempt to free the religion of Islam from the shackles of a too rigid orthodoxy, and to accomplish reforms which will render it adaptable to the complex demands of modern life.<sup>18</sup> On this premise Fazlur Rahman defines Muslim modernists as "those who have made a conscious and articulate effort to reformulate Islamic values and principles according to modern thought or to integrate modern thought and institutions with Islam."<sup>19</sup> Among the outstanding figures regarded as major catalysts of Islamic modernism were Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905) and Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) in the Middle East, and Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) and Muhammad Iqbal

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<sup>17</sup> Fazlur Rahman, "Revival And Reform In Islam," op.cit., pp.636-641; John. L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., pp. 115-124; Andrew Rippin, *Muslims Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, op.cit., p. 30.

<sup>18</sup>Charles C. Adams, *Islam and Modernism in Egypt* (New York: Russel & Russel, 1968), p. 1.

<sup>19</sup>See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam*, op.cit., p. 222.

(1875-1938) in South Asia.

Islamic modernism is often distinguished by scholars from pre-modern Islamic reformism. In this regards, John L. Esposito observes that pre-modern reformism was primarily a response from within Islam to an internal socio-moral decline of the community, whereas Islamic modernism was a response to both continued internal weaknesses and the external political and religio-cultural threat of colonialism.<sup>20</sup> In distinguishing between Islamic reformism and Islamic modernism, Ira M. Lapidus states that "Islamic modernism was a nineteenth century doctrine of Muslim political elites and intelligentsia, and must be distinguished from Islamic reformism, which was the doctrine of ulama. The essential principle of modernism was that the defeat of Muslims at the European powers had revealed their vulnerability, and that the restoration of their political power required them to borrow European military techniques, centralize state power, modernize their economies and provide education for their elites."<sup>21</sup> He further says: "More commonly, ulama resistance was expressed in reformist terms. Islamic reformism had its origin in the seventeenth and eighteenth century and preceded European domination."<sup>22</sup>

Despite differences in context, there are some remarkable common features and links between pre-modern Islamic reformism and Islamic modernism. Pre-modern Islamic reformism responded to internal problems of the Muslim community, whilst Islamic modernism responded to both the internal and external threats to the community. Pre-modern Islamic reform movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had contributed to the pattern of Islamic politics and provided a legacy for twentieth century Islam.<sup>23</sup> This is clearly explained in Esposito's words:<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>See John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, op.cit., p. 30; idem, *Islam the Straight Path*, op. cit., p. 124.

<sup>21</sup>Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 560-561.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., p. 563.

<sup>23</sup>John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>24</sup>John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op. cit., p. 155.

"Pre-modern revival movements demonstrated the power of an appeal to Islam in providing rationale for community decline and initiating religio-political movements bent on social and moral reform. These pre-modernist movements left a legacy to modern Islam in their ideological interpretation of Islam and their activist methods and organization. Islam proved a potent force in both the response to internal decline and the reaction to European imperialism. Islamic modernists reinterpreted Islamic sources to obtain new answers and to assimilate some Western ideas and institutions. Islamic modernism influenced attitudes toward Islam regarding both its past significance and its modern relevance. Its emphasis on Islam as a progressive, dynamic, rational religion generated a sense of pride, identity, and conviction that Islam was relevant to modern life."

Though Islamic modernism has frequently been the term used to refer to Islamic reform in the modern era, the term Islamic reformism is also used, sometimes, to denote a form of Islamic reform that emerges in the modern age. In that case, Islamic reformism, for most scholars, is regarded as a synthesis between Islamic traditionalism and Islamic modernism.<sup>25</sup> Islamic reformism, as Hisham Sharabi points out, has often been referred to as Islamic modernism, but reformism is modernizing only in special sense and a limited degree. At heart, he further maintains, Islamic reformism is traditional bound; its primary goal is to safeguard Islam and the institutional structures upholding it. As a revivalist movement, reformism is equipped with a more rational awareness of its situation and needs. The reformist position, in its fundamental premises and ultimate conclusions, opposes the secularization and westernization elements of social modernization more effectively than traditionalism ever did precisely because it is more rational. At the same time however, it opens the door for change within prescribed limits.<sup>26</sup>

The reform movements established, whether by pre-modern revivalists, Muslim modernists or reformists, are also known as the Salafiyyah.<sup>27</sup> The Arabic term

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<sup>25</sup>See Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West*, op.cit., p. 7; M. A. Zaki Badawi, *The Reformers of Egypt* (London: Croom Helm Ltd. 1978), p. 149.

<sup>26</sup>Hisham Sharabi, *Arab Intellectuals and the West*, op.cit., p. 7.

<sup>27</sup>The word *salafiyyah* is derived from the root "*salaf*" which refers to the *salaf al-sālih* (virtuous forefathers), i.e. the first three generations of Muslims, who were highly esteemed by later Muslims for their companionship with the Prophet and proximity to his time, and for their pure understanding and practice of Islam and contribution to it. The *salafī* is one who follows the methods and principles of the *salaf al-sālih*. See Muḥammad Saʿīd Ramadān al-Būṭī, *al-Salafiyyah Marḥalah Zamaniyyah Mubārakah lā Madhhab Islāmī* (Dimāshq: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), pp. 9-23; *Al-Mawsūʿat al-Muyassarah fī al-Adyan wa al-*

Salafiyyah is often used interchangeably with *islāḥ* (reform) and *tajdīd* (renewal).<sup>28</sup> The Salafiyyah is not confined to a specific group nor to a certain era, but it is used to generally denote the Islamic reform movements whose emphasis is on the restoration of Islamic doctrines to their pure form, adherence to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, rejection of blind imitation (*taqlīd*) and innovation (*bid'ah*), and reform the moral, cultural and political conditions of Muslims.<sup>29</sup> Among its adherents were reformers of the classical era, such as Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (780-855), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328) and Ibn al-Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (1292-1350) who were regarded as articulators of classic Salafiyyah; pre-modern reformists such as Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792), Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) and Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762); and modernists such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897), Muḥammad ʿAbduh (1849-1905) and Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935), the founders and spiritual fathers of the modern Salafiyyah reform movement.<sup>30</sup> The modern Salafiyyah are distinguished from the classical and pre-modern Salafiyyah by their essentially intellectual and modernist nature and by the diversity and expanse of their objectives. Against a legacy of stagnation, moral and social decay, political despotism, and foreign domination, the modern Salafiyyah seek to revitalize Islam, to bridge the gap between historical Islam and modernity, and to restore Muslim solidarity and vigour.

The teaching of the Salafiyyah continues to inspire later generations of Muslim activists. The influence of the Salafiyyah still prevails in modern Islamic movements, as observed in the Ikhwān Muslimūn founded by Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906-1949) in Egypt, and Jamaat-i Islami established by Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) in the Indian subcontinent. These movements, which Esposito describes as neorevivalist movements, uphold the centrality of Islam to future progress and are convinced of its

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*Madhāhib al-Muʿāṣirah* (Riyād: Al-Nadwat al-ʿĀlamiyyah li-al-Shabāb al-Islāmī, 1972), pp. 273-278.

<sup>28</sup>Emad Eldin Shahin, "Salafiyyah," in John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 463.

<sup>29</sup>Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, *al-Salafiyyah Marḥalah Zamaniyyah Mubārakah*, op.cit., pp. 13-15.

<sup>30</sup>Emad Eldin Shahin, "Salafiyyah," op.cit., p. 463; John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., pp. 129-132; A. Merad, "Islāḥ", op.cit., p. 141.



adaptability to modern life. They are more sceptical and critical of the West, and, while accepting modernity, they believe in the self-sufficiency of Islam as the basis for society and state.<sup>31</sup> They, however, do not attempt to build on the intellectual venture that the modern Salafiyyah had undertaken in legal, political and educational reform, or to devise a systematic intellectual framework for reform. Instead, through their organizational structures and populist appeal, these movements focus on reforming the morality and beliefs of Muslim individuals as a precondition for the reform of the society as a whole.<sup>32</sup> The Ikhwān Muslimūn and the Jamaat-i Islami movements set the examples for many subsequent movements. However, their ideological orientation, activism, and sometimes militant tendency, distinguished them from the modern Salafiyyah, and hence, earned them the label of fundamentalist.

Islamic fundamentalism<sup>33</sup> is another term that closely relates to the discussion of Islamic reform. Islamic fundamentalism, as Andrew Rippin maintains, is applied, mainly by Westerners, to those who call for a strict implementation of the Sharī'ah including the call for an Islamic state, while opposition to Western ways and to the perceived corruption of society have been its important characteristics.<sup>34</sup> Islamic fundamentalism is also referred to as radical Islamism by some scholars.<sup>35</sup> Yousuf M.

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<sup>31</sup>See John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., pp. 147-154.

<sup>32</sup>Emad Eldin Shahin, "Salafiyyah," op.cit., p. 467. See also, John. L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., pp. 152-154.

<sup>33</sup>The term fundamentalism is originally applied in Christianity. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines fundamentalism as 'strict maintenance of traditional Protestant beliefs such as the inerrancy of Scripture and literal acceptance of creeds as fundamental of Christianity.' This term is also used to denote 'strict maintenance of ancient or fundamental doctrines of any religion, especially Islam.' See *The Oxford English Dictionary*, op.cit., p. 549. Islamic fundamentalism, in general means "a return to the fundamental principles of Islam, a return to the pure moral ethics of morality and positive integrity, a return to balanced relationship between God, man and society, and man and his inner self." See Patrick Bannerman, *Islam in Perspective*, op.cit., p. 156. However, in current Western media the term Islamic fundamentalism is used to signify abhorrent extremism, religious narrow-mindedness and militant radicalism, and sometimes eroded to become associated with violence, terrorist bloodshed and political assassination. See *ibid.*, pp. 155-156; John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., p. xiii.

<sup>34</sup>Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, op.cit., p. 38.

<sup>35</sup>See William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," op.cit., pp.314-317; Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, op.cit., pp. 39-40.

Choueiri in his *Islamic Fundamentalism* states that:<sup>36</sup>

"Islamic fundamentalism is a vague term currently in vogue as a catchphrase used to describe the militant ideology of contemporary Islamic movements. ....Whereas the term 'fundamentalism' has an obvious Protestant origin, denoting the literal yet creative interpretation of the Bible, it is redefined here, for lack of better word, in order to convey a less rigorous connotation. Its direct meaning is assumed to indicate a certain intellectual stance that claims to derive political principles from a timeless divine text."

In its contemporary expression, the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism, as R. Hrair Dekmejian points out, represents the culmination of accumulated revelation, tradition, and practice going back to the Prophet Muḥammad. Thus, the content of modern fundamentalist ideology and its legitimization is consciously based on the selective interpretation of Islamic historical epochs. The present day fundamentalist society and movements seek to justify their very existence and mission by referring to divinely ordained duties and historical precedents combined with a deterministic self-view and worldview.<sup>37</sup>

Fundamentalism in the current Islamic world is often linked to the pre-modern revival movements, especially those led by Ibn Taymiyyah and the Wahhabīs, for it shares some common characteristics with the latter.<sup>38</sup> The pre-modern revival movements were characterized by Fazlur Rahman as having the following characteristics:

- i. A deep and transforming concern with the socio-moral degeneration of Muslim society.
- ii. A call to go back to original Islam and shed the superstitions inculcated by popular forms of Sufism, to get rid of the idea of the fixity and finality of the traditional schools of law, and to attempt to perform *ijtihād*, that is, to rethink for oneself the meaning of the original message.

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<sup>36</sup>Yousuf M. Choueiri, *Islamic Fundamentalism* (London:Pinter, 1990), pp. 9-10.

<sup>37</sup>R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, op.cit., p. 37.

<sup>38</sup>Andrew Rippin, *Muslims Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, op.cit., p. 31; R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in Arab World*, op.cit., pp. 38-41.



- iii. A call to remove the crushing burden of predeterministic outlook produced by popular religion but also materially contributed to by the almost ubiquitous influence of Ash'arī theology.
- iv. A call to carry out this revivalist reform through armed forces (*jihād*) if necessary.<sup>39</sup>

This is a platform which many of the fundamentalist movements in contemporary Islam have inherited or, at least rely on for inspiration and analysis.

Among the contemporary Islamic groups which were frequently associated with Islamic fundamentalism were the Ikhwān Muslimūn of Egypt and Jamaat-i Islami of the Indian subcontinent, while Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966) and Abul A`la Mawdudi (1903-1979) were regarded as key figures of the fundamentalist movements.<sup>40</sup> For these fundamentalist groups and individuals, Islam is all-encompassing, as it is for the modernists, but the emphasis is far more on the legitimacy of past solutions to modern problems. They agree with the modernists that Islam is flexible, non-superstitious and encourages *ijtihād*, but they are likely to grant it less scope and they emphasize that it must be done in an authentically Islamic way, and not as a covert means of copying the West. In line with this, the fundamentalists tend to accept more of the past *ijtihād* of the scholars and to emphasize somewhat less the failings of the community in pre-modern times, and somewhat more the distortions caused by Western colonialism.<sup>41</sup> In the view of the fundamentalists, Islam is unique and distinctive, and comparisons of Islam to the West, as made by many modernists, are false. This is not to be seen as a rejection of the West as such, for this group is generally ready to adopt modern technology and political organization.<sup>42</sup> They accept change in a controlled

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<sup>39</sup>Fazlur Rahman, "Islam: Challenges and Opportunities" in Alford T. Welch and Pierre Cachia (eds.), *Islam: Past Influence and Present Challenge* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1979), p. 317.

<sup>40</sup>See Andrew Rippin, *Muslims Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, vol. 2, op.cit., pp. 31, 39; R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in Arab World*, op.cit., pp. 60-62; William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," op.cit., pp. 314-315.

<sup>41</sup>William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," op.cit., p. 314.

<sup>42</sup>Andrew Rippin, *Muslims Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, vol. 2, op.cit., p. 39; William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," op.cit., p. 315.

fashion, and use the authoritative sources of the past to legitimize changes in the present.

Reviewing the above-mentioned terms, it can be concluded that all the different terminologies for Islamic reform as they are used by scholars denote in specific contexts the varying shapes, patterns and degrees of Islamic reform which have taken place throughout the history of the Muslim community. The usage of these terminologies in various contexts may imply different meanings and connotations, but they generally refer to the same substance, namely, Islamic reform, which in any circumstances denotes an effort to purify the community from accretions and social evils by calling them to return to the basic principles of Islam.

## The Origin of Islamic Reform

As previously stated, reform or *islāḥ* is a deeply rooted tradition in Islam and in the Muslim historical experience. The term *islāḥ* is always used in conjunction with the term *tajdīd* (renewal).<sup>43</sup> The concepts of *islāḥ* and *tajdīd* indicate a call for a return to the fundamental principles of Islam, i.e. the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Both concepts, which constitute a basic component in the world-view of Islam, derive their origins from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.

The term *islāḥ* is used in some verses of the Qur'ān to signify the reform preached by the prophets when they warned their sinful communities and called on them to return to God's path by redirecting their lives, both as individuals and as a community, within the norms of the *shar'ah*.<sup>44</sup> Those who work for *islāḥ*, the *muṣliḥūn* (reformers) are regularly praised in the Qur'ān, and they are described as being

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<sup>43</sup>See for example, Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," op.cit., pp. 632-656; John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid* and *Islah*," op.cit., pp. 32-47.

<sup>44</sup>For example, see Q: 11: 88 which mentions that Prophet Shu'ayb told the people to whom he was sent: "I only desire *islāḥ* (reform) so far as I am able, to the best of my power." See also, Q: 4: 114.

engaged in the work of God.<sup>45</sup> This Qur'ānic mandate which is epitomized in the lives and preaching of the prophets, especially that of Muḥammad, coupled with God's command to enjoin good and prohibit evil, have provided the time-honoured rationale for Islamic reform.<sup>46</sup> The concept of *tajdīd* is derived from the tradition of the Prophet which says: "God will send to this *ummah* (Muslim community) at the head of each century those who will renew its faith for it."<sup>47</sup> The activity of renewal is *tajdīd* and the person who brings it about is called *mujaddid* (renewer). The *mujaddid* of Islam is believed to be sent at the beginning of each century to restore true Islamic practice and regenerate the Muslim community that tends, over time, to start departing from the path defined by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.<sup>48</sup>

The tradition of reform and renewal is a permanent feature in the religious and cultural history of Islam. It represents, on the one hand, the individual and communal effort to define Islam clearly and explicitly in terms of its authentic sources, namely the Qur'ān and the Sunnah and, on the other, an attempt to work towards a situation in which the lives of Muslims, in personal and social terms, would conform to the norms and values of Islam.<sup>49</sup> The historical development of reform and renewal is related to the spirit of opposing various religious deviations, evils and blameworthy innovations (*bida'*) which emerged throughout the cultural evolution of the community. The major tasks of the reformers and renewers were to refute these errors of their century, to combat the various sects that are believed to have

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<sup>45</sup>See for example, Q: 7: 170: "And as those who hold fast to the Book and perform prayers perfectly, certainly, We shall never waste the reward of the *musliḥūn*."

<sup>46</sup>John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., pp. 115-116.

<sup>47</sup>See *Sunan Abī Dawūd*, in "Kitāb al-Malāḥim," 3740. The renewers were believed to appear periodically in each century after the first epoch (*al-ʿaṣr al-awwal*) of Islam. According to Rashīd Riḍā, the "first epoch" (*al-ʿaṣr al-awwal*) indicates the first three best generations, namely, the generation of the Prophet Muḥammad and his Companions, then their followers (*tābiʿūn*), and then the successor of the latter (*atbāʾ al-tābiʿīn*). See Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār* (Syria: Dār al-Fikr, n. d.), vol.2, p. 81, vol. 7, pp. 143 & 198. This refers to the *ḥadīth*: "The best people are those of my generation, then the following, and then those who come after," narrated by al-Bukhārī and others. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in "Kitāb al-Manāqib," 3377, 3378.

<sup>48</sup>John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform," op.cit., p. 33; John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., p. 116.

<sup>49</sup>Ali Merad, "Islāḥ," op.cit., p. 141; John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform," op.cit., p. 32.

introduced blameworthy innovations into Islam, to bring the faithful back to the purity of the original faith, to return to true Islamic practice and worship, and to restore the Sunnah by the study and imitation of the Prophet's tradition.<sup>50</sup> This process of reform and renewal involves, at least, two major aspects: the first being a return to the ideal pattern as revealed in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah; and the second, the right to practice *ijtihād* i.e. to reinterpret the sources of Islam in order to purify and revitalize the society.<sup>51</sup>

Throughout the history of the Muslim *ummah*, there were several figures who appeared as the reformers and renewers of Islam. A great figure of Islam who was well known as the first *mujaddid* in the history of Islam was ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (681-720), the eighth Caliph of the Umayyad Caliphate. Other prominent figures who were recognized as the reformers and renewers of their centuries were: the four Imams of the Sunnī schools of law, viz., Abū Ḥanīfah (699-767), Mālīk b. Anas (714-798), al-Shāfiʿī (767-854) and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal (780-855); al-Ghazzālī (d. 1111), Ibn Taymiyyah (1263-1328), Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī (d. 1449), Muḥammad ʿAlī al-Shawkānī (1760-1834) and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1703-1792).<sup>52</sup> Shaykh Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1624) and Shah Walī Allāh (1703-1762) of the Indian subcontinent, Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) and Muḥammad ʿAlī b. al-Sanūsī (1787-1859) of Africa were also regarded as the reformers and renewers of their societies. The primary concern of these reformers and renewers of the pre-modern era was the socio-moral reconstruction and reform of society. They were conscious of Muslim degeneration and tried to rectify social evils among Muslims and to raise their moral standards by calling them to return to pristine Islam.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup>Ali Merad, "Islāh" in *EI*, op.cit., p. 142; Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., p. 116; Fazlur Rahman, "Revival And Reform," op.cit., p. 640, and Aḥmad Amīn, *Zuʿamāʾ al-Islāh fi ʿAsr al-Ḥadīth* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahdat al-Miṣriyya, 1948), p. 8.

<sup>51</sup>John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., p. 116. Cf. S. Abul Aʿla Maududi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, (trans. by Al-Ashʿari)(Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd. 3<sup>d</sup> ed. 1979), pp. 38-39.

<sup>52</sup>See for example, S. Abul Aʿla Maududi, *A Short History of the Revivalist Movement in Islam*, op.cit., pp. 45-81.

<sup>53</sup>Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," op.cit., pp. 640-641.

The modern era has also witnessed the birth of some great reformers. The Middle East and South Asia have produced some reformers who led various Islamic modernist movements. Among them were Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī (1838-1897) and Muḥammad ‘Abduh (1849-1905), the great thinkers who were revered as fathers of Islamic modernism; Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (1865-1935) and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Kawākibī (1854-1902) of the Middle East. In the Indian subcontinent the Islamic modernist movement was led principally by two great Muslim figures, namely Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898) and Muhammad Iqbal (1875-1938).<sup>54</sup> These reformers proclaimed the need to revitalize Islam. They blamed the internal malaise in Muslim societies, their loss of power, backwardness and inability to respond effectively to European colonialism, on a blind and unquestioned clinging to the past (*taqlīd*). Islamic reformers stressed the dynamics, flexibility and adaptability that had characterized the early development of Islam, notable for its achievements in law, education and the sciences. They pressed for internal reform through the reinterpretation (*ijtihād*) and selective adaptation or Islamization of Western ideas and technology. They emphasized internal self-criticism, a struggle to redefine Islam and to demonstrate its relevance to the new situations in which Muslims have found themselves in their modern societies.

The modernist reform and renewal movement constitutes one of the most remarkable phenomena in the evolution of Islam since the end of the nineteenth century. It was a result of the cultural renaissance movement (*nahḍah*), which marked the reawakening of the Muslim world in general and the Middle East in particular as a consequence of the influence of Western ideas and civilization and also as a reaction to imperialism.<sup>55</sup> Its influence spread to most Muslim countries, including

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<sup>54</sup>For more about these figures, see for example, Ahmad Amin, *Zu‘amā’ al-Islāh*, op.cit.; Ali Rahnama, *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (Kuala Lumpur: S. Abdul Majeed, 1995); Malcolm H. Kerr, *Islamic Reform, The Political and Legal Theories of Muhammad ‘Abduh and Rashid Rida* (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966); Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1967).

<sup>55</sup>Nehemia Levtzion and John O. Voll, *Eighteenth-Century Renewal and Reform in Islam* (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1987), p. 5; H.A.R. Gibb, *Modern Trends in Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947), pp. 63-64; Ilse Lichtenstadter, *Islam and the Modern Age, an Analysis and an Appraisal* (New York: Bookman Associates, 1965), pp. 12-15.

Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia.

The spirit of reform and renewal has continued to be a significant factor in the modern history of the Muslim community. The reform and revival spirit that emerged in the post-modernist reform in the twentieth century history of Islam was in the form of what is referred to as neorevivalism or Islamic fundamentalism, i.e. the new religious societies, in particular the Ikhwān Muslimūn established by Ḥasan al-Bannā in Egypt, and the Jamaat-i-Islami founded by Abul A`la Mawdudi in the Indian subcontinent.<sup>56</sup> These movements perceived the Muslim community of the twentieth century to be at a critical crossroads. Like the Islamic modernists, they acknowledged the internal weaknesses of the community, the external threat of Western colonialism, and the value of science and technology. However, the Ikhwan and the Jamaat were more extensive in their condemnation of the West and assertion of the total self-sufficiency of Islam. For them Islam was not restricted to personal piety or simply a component in social or political life, but was a comprehensive ideology for personal and public life, the foundation for Muslim state and society.<sup>57</sup>

Despite distinctive differences in their movements due to local conditions, both Ḥasan al-Bannā and Abul A`la Mawdudi, the chief architects of recent worldwide Islamic revivalism, combined religion with social activism. They shared a revivalist ideology and established activist organizations that remain vibrant today and have served as an example for others throughout much of the Muslim world. Following revivalist logic, they called for a return to the Qur'ān, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the practice of the early community to establish an Islamic system of government. They rejected *taqlīd*, upheld the right of *ijtihād*, and criticized Ṣūfī excesses, saint worship and the backwardness of the '*ulamā*'. While open to science and technology, they denounced Muslim intellectuals and governments for their dependence on the West. They did not seek to address modern life by demonstrating the compatibility of Islam with the West, but, instead, they claimed that Muslims could adapt to the

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<sup>56</sup>Sometimes these group were referred to in contemporary writings as neotraditionalist. See John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path.*, op.cit., pp. 198-199.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid., pp. 147-148.



demands of modernity by reference to Islam alone. They believed that the renewal of Muslim society and its social transformation or modernization must be rooted in Islamic principles and values. Neorevivalism blended the worldview that informed the activism of premodern revivalist groups, like the Wahhābī movement, with the holistic vision of Islam articulated in theory by modernists, like al-Afghānī, ʿAbduh and Iqbal. The result was an ideology grounded solely on Islam, an Islamic alternative that presented Islam as a timeless, rational, comprehensive faith whose transcendent message was relevant to this life as well as the next.<sup>58</sup>

The Ikhwān and the Jamaat were obviously the ideological movements which advocated an Islamic government based on *shūrā* or consultation under the leadership of the ʿulamāʾ and committed to applying the Sharʿah in public affairs. Their leadership was often lay rather than clerical, as in the case of leaders such as al-Bannā himself, Sayyid Quṭb and ʿUmar al-Tilimisānī of the Ikhwān, and Mawdudi and Khurshid Ahmad of the Jamaat-i-Islami.<sup>59</sup> Given their wide appeal, the influence of Ikhwān and Jamaat movements spread not only to the neighbouring countries, but to all over the Muslim world. The Ikhwān's branches, for example, are established in most Arab countries, such as in Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Sudan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The succeeding Ikhwān's leaders, Sayyid Quṭb, ʿAbd al-Qādir ʿAwdah, Ḥasan al-Hudaybī, Mustafā Mashhūr, Saʿīd Ḥawwā and Faṭḥī Yakan have been the spiritual fathers and the ideologues of current advocates of Islamic resurgence. Their writings were very influential and had an electrifying effect on the minds of the activists of present-day Islamic revivalism. The Ikhwān and the Jamaat have been the models for the establishment of most Islamic reform movements in the Muslim world.

Besides the growth of neorevivalism or fundamentalism in the present prevailing Islamic resurgence, the Islamic reform spirit is also seen in those who are called the neomodernist group.<sup>60</sup> They are activists who also look to the early Islamic

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<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 148-153.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid, p. 198.

<sup>60</sup>This group is also referred to as modern Islamic reformers. See John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., pp. 199-200.

period as embodying the normative ideal. Although they overlap with neotraditionalists, with whom they are often grouped, the neomodernists distinguish more sharply between substance and form, between the principles and values of Islam's unchangeable revelation and the historically and socially conditioned institutions and practices that can and should be changed to meet contemporary needs. They perceive the regulations enshrined in the law books as representative of the understanding and interpretation of early jurists who applied the principles and values of Islam to their societies. For them the revealed immutable Sharfah principles and laws contained in the corpus of traditional law should be distinguished from those regulations in Islamic law that are contingent and relative.<sup>61</sup> The latter, according to them, need to be reformulated in the light of the needs of modern society.

The figures in this group include Iran's Ali Shari`ati, Palestine born Ismā`il al-Farūqī, Tunisia's Rashīd Ghannoushī, Saudi Arabia's `Abd al-Ḥamīd Abū Sulaymān, Sudan's Ḥasan al-Turābī and Malaysia's Anwar Ibrahim.<sup>62</sup> Most of them, despite obtaining their advanced degrees from major universities in the West, neither opt for a Western secular orientation nor are they Western-oriented in their views as the earlier generation of Islamic modernists were. Unlike Muḥammad `Abduh and Sayyid Ahmad Khan, the neomodernists do not see themselves as responding to the West, but instead as seeking in a more independent, authentic manner to meet the changing needs of their societies. They have learned from the West but do not wish to Westernize Muslim society. They remain Islamically oriented and focus on commitment to "Islamic modernization," a future in which political and social development are more firmly rooted in past history and traditional values. In contrast with the fundamentalists, their rethoric is not as critical of the West, and they are open to a selective process of assimilation. They also emphasize Islamization, a process by which Islamic principles and values are reapplied to meet the conditions of a new social milieu.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid., pp. 199.

<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p.200.



As Islamic reform is deeply rooted in the basic soil of Islam, it will continue to be a significant element in the history of the Muslim community. From a contemporary perspective, Islamic reform is a catalyst of Islamic resurgence that prevails in all the Muslim world. It might emerge in various forms such as Islamic fundamentalism and neomodernism as can be seen today, but the substance and objective are similar. All advocate a return to the basic principles of Islam, though the modes may vary. The following sections will highlight some key principles of Islamic reform.

## The Ideology and Method of Islamic Reform

The long tradition of Islamic reform, which includes notions of political and social activism, dates from the early years of Islam to the present day. Down through the ages, the reformists, both individuals and organizations, have undertaken the renewal of the community in times of weakness and decline, responding to the apparent gap between the Islamic ideal and the realities of Muslim life. At the heart of the reformist world-view is the belief that the Muslim world is in a state of political, economic and religious decline. The cause is identified as the Muslim's departure from true Islamic values, brought about by the infiltration and assimilation of local, indigenous, un-Islamic beliefs and practices as well as the Westernization and secularization of society.<sup>64</sup> Its cure is a purification by a return to true Islam in personal and public life, which will ensure the restoration of Islamic identity, values and power.

For the reformists, Islam is a comprehensive way of life as stipulated in the Qur'ān, exemplified by the Prophet Muḥammad and the first Muslim community, and embodied in the all-embracing nature of the Sharī'ah. Thus, the reconstruction of

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<sup>64</sup>See Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," op.cit., p. 641; James P. Piscatori, *Islam in a World of Nation-States*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 24-25; Khurshid Ahmad, "The Nature of the Islamic Resurgence," in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 218-219.

Muslim societies and governments requires the reimplementation of Islamic law, the basis for an Islamically guided and socially just state and society.<sup>65</sup> It is a return to Islam, that is, to the fundamentals of the Qur'ān, the Sunnah of the Prophet, and the early Islamic community - that offers the model for Islamic reform.

The key ideological components of any Islamic reform programme include: (1) Islam as the solution; (2) a return to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet as the method; and (3) a community governed by God's revealed law, the Sharī'ah, as the goal.<sup>66</sup> Based on this premiss, scholars have identified several continuing themes of ideology and methods of Islamic reform. The essential ones are as follows:

1. In addressing the weaknesses and socio-moral corruption of the Muslim community, Islamic reform provides the diagnosis and cure: the cause is a departure from true Islamic belief and practice; and the cure is a return to the fundamentals of Islam.<sup>67</sup>
2. Islamic reform emphasizes total submission to God, which is an important component of Islamic totalism. Islamic reform reasserts a belief that Islamic monotheism means the unity and totality of God's will for both the individual Muslim and the Islamic community. Religion is integral to all realms of life: social, political and moral.<sup>68</sup>
3. Islamic reform also maintains that the restoration of true Islam necessitates personal interpretation (*ijtihād*), which is based on the sole authoritative foundations of Islam: the Qur'ān and prophetic practice as found in the early community.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>65</sup>John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, op.cit., p. 19.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>67</sup>A. Merad, "Islāh," in *El*, op.cit., p. 141; Fazlur Rahman, "Revival and Reform in Islam," op.cit., p. 640; John O. Voll, "Renewal and Reform in Islamic History," in Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam*, op.cit., p. 35.

<sup>68</sup>Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, op.cit., p. 39.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

4. Islamic reform firmly rejects the blind acceptance (*taqlīd*) of past traditional doctrinal authorities, for the medieval synthesis of Muslim life is claimed to include un-Islamic historical accretions or unwarranted innovations (*bidaʿ*). Instead, Islamic reform reasserts the right of independent analysis (*ijtihād*), rather than the reliance upon the opinions of the preceding generations of Islamic scholars.<sup>70</sup> The elimination of superstition and obscurantism, and the reform of Sufism are also emphasized.
5. Islamic reform also re-emphasizes the belief that the socio-moral revival of Islamic society requires political action, as epitomized by *jihād*, the exertion to realize God's will by moral self-discipline and, when necessary, military combat.<sup>71</sup>
6. Regarding modernity, Islamic reform affirms the necessity of reviving the Muslim community by the reinterpretation or reformulation of its Islamic heritage in the light of the contemporary world, responding to the political, cultural and scientific challenges of the West and modern life. It attempts to show the compatibility, adaptability and flexibility of Islam when applied to modern ideas and institutions, whether they be reason, science and technology or democracy, constitutionalism and representative government. However, the pace, direction and extent of change are to be subordinate to Islamic beliefs and values in order to guard against the infiltration of Western values and excessive dependence on them.<sup>72</sup>

The above characteristics are apparently common to all Islamic reform movements. Their ideologies and methods, which are constructed on several basic doctrinal principles, will be examined in the next section.

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<sup>70</sup>J. O. Voll, "Revival and Reform," op.cit., p. 35; Andrew Rippin, *Muslims*, op.cit., pp. 30-31. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path*, op.cit., p. 116.

<sup>71</sup>Fazlur Rahman, "Islam: Challenges and Opportunities," op.cit., p. 317; Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, op.cit., p. 39.

<sup>72</sup>Esposito, *Islam and Politics*, op.cit., p. 45; idem, *The Islamic Threat*, op.cit., p. 19; William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," op.cit., p. 311.

## The Doctrinal Principles of Islamic Reform

### The Return to First Principles: The Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet

The need for a return to first principles is justified by canonical and historical arguments.<sup>73</sup> Regarding the former, the reformists' standpoint is that Islam in its entirety is contained in the Qur'ān, and the God-inspired teachings of the Prophet are the natural complement of revelation. The Qur'ān says: "This day, I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favour upon you, and chosen for you Islam as your religion" (5: 3); "We have neglected nothing in the Book" (6: 38); "He (the Messenger) does not speak of (his own) desire. It is only an Inspiration that is inspired" (53: 3-4). The reformists affirm that religion can be received only from God and his Messenger, and Muslims must abide by what the Messenger has transmitted regarding authorization and interdiction. The Qur'ān states: "O you who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger and those of you who are in authority" (4: 59); "And whatever the Messenger gives you, take it, and whatever he forbids you, abstain (from it), and fear God" (59: 7). Thus, for the reformists, adherence to Islam is defined by reference to the revelation, i.e. the Qur'ān and the Prophet's Sunnah.

Concerning the historical tradition, it is believed that the basis of the historical success of the Arabs was Islam, whose sources are the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.<sup>74</sup> Like their distant predecessors (*Salaf*), Muslims of today could achieve worldly power and enjoy moral well-being, if they armed themselves with those moral convictions that constituted the strength and grandeur of the *Salaf*, and if they strove to demonstrate to contemporary Muslim society the values of faith and steadfast obedience to the teachings of Islam.<sup>75</sup> This is clearly stated in a maxim attributed to Mālik b. Anas: "The later success of this community will only ensue from those

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<sup>73</sup>A. Merad, "Islāh," op.cit., p. 145.

<sup>74</sup>Rashid Ridā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, op.cit., vol. 10, p. 437.

<sup>75</sup>Ibid., vol. 2, pp. 339-441.

elements which made for its initial success.”<sup>76</sup>

The following section will briefly highlight on the reformists’ doctrines regarding the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

## The Qur’ān

The reformists’ position concerning the Qur’ān is similar to that of the Salafīs. The Qur’ān is identified as the Word of God and not a human creation. It is intangible, not subject to alterations and it contains an eternal and universal message. It is regarded as the primary canon and foundation of the religion. Moreover, it constitutes the religion in all its richness, whether in faith (*‘aqā’id*), legal injunctions (*aḥkāṁ*), or ethics (*ādāb*). Generally, the Qur’ān contains the prototype of everything needed for the life of the community.

As the Qur’ān is the supreme authority of Islam, the reformists assert that its exegesis and understanding are most important. This is apparent from the problems of its interpretation (*ta’wīl*) and commentary (*tafsīr*). The reformists’ view of the obscure verses (*āyāt mutashābihāt*), is that believers must accept the revealed facts as they are presented in their most literal sense, with a wholehearted trust in the truths they contain, truths which transcend messages taken at face value.<sup>77</sup> In the eyes of the reformists, only God knows the reality of the *āyāt mutashābihāt*, and the correct attitude of the believers is unquestioning recognition (*taslīm*) of and trust (*tafwīḍ*) in God. According to Muḥammad ‘Abduh and Rashīd Riḍā, this act of faith is a canonical obligation.<sup>78</sup>

The reformists strongly denounce the subjective interpretation (*ta’wīl*), which claims to find a hidden meaning behind the literal message, as the Qur’ān states:

“He it is who has sent down to you the Book wherein are verses that are

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<sup>76</sup>As quoted by Rashīd Riḍā, in *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 443.

<sup>77</sup>Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 453; vol. 10, p. 141.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 166-168.

entirely clear - they are the substance of the Book - and others that are obscure. But those in whose hearts is deviation, follow that which is obscure, seeking dissension (*fitnah*), and seeking its interpretation (*ta'wīl*). But none knows its interpretation save God. And those who are firmly grounded in knowledge say: "We believe in it; the whole of it is from our Lord." And none receive admonition except men of understanding." (3: 7)

According to the reformists, *ta'wīl* is a typical example of innovation (*bidaʿah*), for it cannot be justified either by the Sunnah or by the tradition of the Salaf, who used to avoid interpreting the *āyāt mutashābihāt* according to their own understanding.<sup>79</sup> The reformists' criticism of *ta'wīl* includes all esoteric and mystical interpretations as well as the extreme rationalists. Throughout the *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Ridā condemn many types of *ta'wīl*, such as the tendentious exegesis by the people of innovation (*ahl al-bidaʿah*), for example, the Jahmiyyah, Qadariyyah, Khawārij, etc; the heretical exegesis by the Bāṭiniyyah and excessive Sūfism; exegesis biased towards one sect or another, giving an arbitrary sense to the revelation; and pseudo-erudite commentaries which embroider the text with false legends and superstitions (*abātīl wa khurafāt*) in the style of the *Isrāʾīliyyāt*. These forms of *ta'wīl* are considered a distortion (*tahrīf*) of the revelation, a criticism originally applied in the Qurʾān to the People of the Book (*ahl al-kitāb*), and applied by the reformists to stigmatize the use of Qurʾānic exegesis for biased goals.<sup>80</sup>

Instead of *ta'wīl*, the reformists are in favour of simple commentary (*tafsīr*), and they lay down the principle that, apart from verses containing a certain mystery, concerning the divine attributes and the states of the hereafter, for example, Qurʾānic revelation can be made just as comprehensible to contemporary Muslims as it was to the Salaf. For the reformists, the *tafsīr* serves to explain the moral values and spiritual guidance (*hady*) which nourish religious feeling and guide the piety of the faithful. It is also a preparation for reading, understanding and meditating upon the Qurʾān, and should be freed from its historico-legendary wrappings and grammatical

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<sup>79</sup>See *ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 166-172; Muḥammad ʿAbduh, *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qāhirah, 1960, 17th edn), pp. 9-10.

<sup>80</sup>Rashīd Ridā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, *op.cit.*, vol. 1, pp. 347, 430; vol. 2, p. 455; vol. 4, pp. 97, 282, 466, and *passim*.



and rhetorical commentaries. It should not be seen as a demonstrative discipline capable of establishing scientific and verifiable truths and satisfying the modern mind which is avid for rationality.<sup>81</sup> Rashīd Riḍā, in his *Tafsīr al-Manār*, deplores the tendency amongst his contemporary commentators to display so much seemingly scientific erudition in their *tafsīrs* that they succeed in diverting the reader from the object of revelation.<sup>82</sup>

With regard to the biblically inspired stories mentioned in the Qur'ān, the reformists criticize those who base the truth of the Book on the authenticity of the facts it offers for meditation by believers. The Qur'ān is neither a historical work (*tārīkh*) nor a narrative work (*qaṣaṣ*), but it is a moral guide and a source of edification.<sup>83</sup> The historicity of the Qur'ānic story is less important than its moral content and virtue as a source of inspiration. The role of a *tafsīr* is to bring the Qur'ānic message as close as possible to the minds and hearts of Muslims, and to establish the meaning of the verses as accurately as human understanding permits, which implies a profound knowledge of Arabic philology.

Regarding the methodology of *tafsīr*, the reformists emphasize, in some cases, *tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi-al-Qur'ān*, that is, certain verses can be explained more precisely by other verses in the Qur'ān. Elsewhere, clarification comes from the version given by the Prophet Muḥammad's Companions and their principal disciples (*tābī' ūn*) often following the explanations given by the Prophet in person. Therefore, any *tafsīr* which is not based on evidence in the Sunnah in the absence of specific scriptural reference is suspect and unacceptable.<sup>84</sup>

To sum up, instead of esoteric interpretation (*ta'wīl*), the reformists insist on straightforward commentary, arguing that difficult texts should be accepted as a matter of faith without attempting to interpret them. They believe that the Qur'ān

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, p. 25, A. Merad, "Islāh," op.cit., p. 147.

<sup>82</sup>Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 75.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., vol. 2, p. 471.

<sup>84</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 174-175; vol. 3, p. 327; Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Risālat al-Tawḥīd*, op.cit., p. 117.

is not hard to understand as long as its primary objective, that is to give moral guidance and direction, is kept in mind.

## The Sunnah

The reformists place great importance on the Sunnah as the second canonical source after the Qur'ān. However, they are not in complete agreement on whether it is a constitutive source like the Qur'ān or only an explanation of it. Some of them maintain that the Sunnah is of the same essence as the Qur'ān. This is the standpoint of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd b. Bādīs (1889-1940), an Algerian reformist who asserts that the religion in its entirety is a revelation of God, and what is meant by the revelation is the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, as stated in Q. 53: 3-4: "Nor does he [the Prophet Muḥammad] speak of his own desire."<sup>85</sup> It is only a revelation that is revealed." Rashīd Riḍā does not totally agree with this viewpoint, but he admits that revelation is not limited to the Qur'ān. According to him, some of the Prophet's teachings on the inspiration of the *rūḥ al-qudus* (the holy spirit) have the same importance as the Qur'ān, although they lack its inimitable expressions.<sup>86</sup>

The reformists agree that the role of the Sunnah is to explain the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān says that the Prophet's mission is to clarify to men its true meaning: "And We have sent down unto you the Reminder [Qur'ān] that you may explain clearly to men what is sent down to them" (16: 44). The Sunnah is second in importance to the Qur'ān for it is an explanatory instrument.<sup>87</sup> Muḥammad 'Abduh maintains that the Qur'ān constitutes the totality of the religion, whereas the Sunnah is an intergral part of it only in the sense that it explains what was revealed.<sup>88</sup> That is why the Sunnah is regarded as the second canonical source.

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<sup>85</sup>As quoted by A. Merad, in "Islāh," op.cit., p. 147.

<sup>86</sup>Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 139; vol. 5, pp. 279, 470; vol. 7, p. 279.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid., vol. 4, p. 18.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid., vol. 9, p. 326.

In their approach to the Sunnah, the reformists reassert the traditional emphasis on the practice of the Prophet as the indisputable standard for belief and behaviour. For them, the departure from the Sunnah is viewed as the critical illness afflicting Islam. However, their adherence to the Sunnah relies only on those *ḥadīths* whose authenticity has been duly established.

The authenticity of the *ḥadīths* is very important from the reformists' point of view for it is the basis of their authority as a canonical source. The reformists recognize the normative value of only a very small number of *ḥadīths* which are held to be unquestionably authentic, that is, *mutawātir ḥadīths*. Muḥammad ʿAbduh, for example, in his *Risālat al-Tawḥīd* suggests that only *mutawātir ḥadīths* are definitively binding. As for *ḥadīths* with only a single narrator (*āḥād*), he says

"He to whom the Sunnah has come, who has satisfied himself of the truth of what it contains, is obliged to believe it. But he to whom it has not come, or on receiving it has had misgivings about its validity, cannot be blamed as an unbeliever if he withholds acceptance of it, since it is not verified by sustained narration."<sup>89</sup>

ʿAbduh thus opened the door to personal judgement in deciding which *ḥadīths* to accept or reject. However, he makes it clear that he does not reject the authority of the Sunnah as such, for "he who denies something that he knows the Prophet said or affirmed, impugns the truth of his message and characterizes it as lies."<sup>90</sup>

ʿAbduh's view on this matter is apparent to later writers. Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, for instance, reports that ʿAbduh was reluctant to accept any *āḥād ḥadīths* as the basis for *tafsīr*. He was especially critical of the so-called *isrāʾīliyyāt*<sup>91</sup>, and he also rejected other *ḥadīths* normally considered authentic.<sup>92</sup> Rashīd Riḍā also

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<sup>89</sup>Muḥammad ʿAbduh, *Risālat al-Tawḥīd*, op.cit., p. 203.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>*Isrāʾīliyyāt* traditions are traditions and reports that contain elements of the legendary and religious literature of the Jews. They were introduced into Islam by some transmitters about whom the biographical literature has never reached complete agreement. On Abduh's rejection of *isrāʾīliyyāt*, see for example, G. H. A. Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature: Discussions in Modern Egypt* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969), in Chapter 10.

<sup>92</sup>See Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Dhahabī, *al-Tafsīr wa al-Mufasssīrūn* (Cairo: Dār al-ʿIlm, 1962), vol. 3, p. 239; J. J. G. Jansen, *The Interpretation of the Qurʾān in Modern Egypt* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1974), p. 27.

confirms that ‘Abduh rejected certain categories of tradition outright, especially the *isrā’iliyyāt* and *fitan*<sup>93</sup> traditions, even when these were found in the *ṣaḥīḥ* collections of *ḥadīth*.<sup>94</sup>

For Rashīd Ridā himself, the only source of the Sunnah that is beyond dispute is of *‘amaliyyah* Sunnah, which has been practised and passed on by each generation of Muslims in *mutawātir* fashion. This includes, for instance, details of the prayers and other important rituals. However, the Sunnah that has been transmitted verbally by a single line of reporters (*āḥād*) must be re-examined according to new criteria. Such a re-examination must encompass even the Sunnah in the sound collections.<sup>95</sup>

Sayyid Aḥmad Khān, the reformist of the Indian subcontinent, has come to reject almost all *ḥadīths* as unreliable.<sup>96</sup> He is severely critical of the classical methods of *ḥadīth* criticism, including those of al-Bukhārī and Muslim, on the grounds that they are based on the personal reliability of the individuals in the *isnād* (chain of narrators) and not on a logical or rational criticism of the *matn* (text) of a *ḥadīth* itself. Influenced by Western scholars such as William Muir and Aloys Sprenger, his questioning attitude towards even the six great classical collections of *ḥadīth* is apparently similar to the conclusions reached by Western orientalists like Goldziher and Schacht.<sup>97</sup> According to him, the *ḥadīths* in the great classical collections of *ḥadīth* constitute, generally speaking, not so much an infallible source of law as a historical reflection of the ideas and attitudes of the first few generations of Muslims.<sup>98</sup> He eventually has come to believe that only traditions dealing with spiritual matters are

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<sup>93</sup>*Fitan* (sg. *fitnah*) traditions are traditions that contain news or prophecies about temptation or civil strife which will befall the Muslim community.

<sup>94</sup>G. H. A. Juynboll, *The Authenticity of the Tradition Literature*, op.cit., p. 18.

<sup>95</sup>Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 41.

<sup>96</sup>See J. M. S. Baljon, *Reforms and Religious Ideas of Sir Sayyid Aḥmad Khān* (Lahore: P.T. Press, 1964), pp. 37-38.

<sup>97</sup>Aziz Ahmad, *Islamic Modernism in India and Pakistan 1857-1964*, op.cit., p. 49.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

of relevance to contemporary Muslims, whereas the traditions dealing with worldly matters are non-binding. Without altogether rejecting the authority of the Sunnah, he severely curtails its scope, calls for new methods of evaluating it, and insists on its subordinate position *vis-a-vis* the Qur'ān.<sup>99</sup>

In the eyes of most reformists, Islam cannot be reduced to matters of faith and canonical obligation (*ʿibādāt*) which are held to be true only because they originate from the Qur'ān and a very small number of *ḥadīths* shown to be authentic (*mutawātir*). Islam is also a political and social system, a complex of ethical values, and a culture. In usage (*ʿādāt*) and human relations (*muʿāmalāt*) determined by a socio-cultural framework which is not ruled by scriptural disposition (*naṣṣ*), the Sunnah and also the traditions of the Salaf are helpful and instructive. They are indeed exemplary and worthy of the attention of Muslims as an excellent reference for both action and moral life.<sup>100</sup>

## The Promotion of *Ijtihād* and Rejection of *Taqlīd*

The reformists vigorously emphasize the necessity and legitimacy of *ijtihād*, that is, personal judgement, based on the interpretation of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah to decide on a point of law. At the same time they criticize *taqlīd*, the blind acceptance or servile dependence upon traditional doctrinal authorities. *Ijtihād* is perceived as "a life-force in religion" (*ḥayāt al-dīn*) whereas *taqlīd* is a source of error and contrary to the spirit of Islam.<sup>101</sup> They strongly deny the fiction of the "closing gate of *ijtihād*" which has constricted the religion, and thus, declare the "reopening of the gate of *ijtihād*."<sup>102</sup> However, they do not consider the opening of the mind to *ijtihād*

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<sup>99</sup>Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, op.cit., p. 33.

<sup>100</sup>A. Merad, "Islām," op.cit., p. 148.

<sup>101</sup>Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 299.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., vol. 8, p. 317.

to be absolute freedom for the critical spirit to call everything into question, for freedom of conscience in religious matters would lead to speculation without end, which is not what the reformists want.<sup>103</sup>

The reformists' idea of *ijtihād* has its limits: *ijtihād* is not applicable to intangible matters, including the fundamental faith (*ʿaqā'id*), acts of worship (*ʿibādāt*) and canonical prohibitions (*tahṛīm dīnī*) which are based on scripture, either because of their explicit and formal nature or because of the irrefutable authenticity of their interpretation (*qaṭʿī al-riwāyah wa al-dalālah*).<sup>104</sup> Beyond these sacred realms, the use of *ijtihād* is permitted.

The reformists hold that the reason for *ijtihād* concerns both the individual and the community. *Ijtihād* is generally an effort to understand the Qur'ān and the Sunnah<sup>105</sup> and it is a part of the right and duty of all Muslims to seek and understand for themselves the revelation and the Sunnah.<sup>106</sup> Muslims must feel personally concerned with the Word of God and the teaching of the Prophet which illuminates it. Constant meditation on scripture, patient efforts to analyze and understand all the resources that they offer should permit all Muslims to steep themselves in the divine message and draw from it principles of moral and spiritual conduct (*hidāyah*). This internal form of *ijtihād* helps to nourish the Muslims' spirituality and guides their conscience in their moral judgements and practical choices. *Ijtihād* is also essential for the community in interpreting the two sources to determine the general principles in political, social and economic matters in accordance with the fundamental commands of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.<sup>107</sup>

The reformists strongly denounce the illegitimate (*buṭlān*) and illicit (*tahṛīm*)

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid.

<sup>104</sup>See Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 118-119; vol. 3, p. 399; vol. 11, pp. 265-268.

<sup>105</sup>*Ijtihād*, according to the reformists, is a way of understanding the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, not a legislation (*tashrīf*), for the only legislator is God. See Rashīd Ridā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, vol. 8, p. 399.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., vol. 2, p. 399.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 118-119.



nature of *taqlīd* and stress its negative effects on Islamic teachings and ethics. They blame *taqlīd* for the cultural stagnation of Islam and the passive submission of the Muslim masses to the traditional religious structures, i.e. the *‘ulamā’* and *shuyūkh*.<sup>108</sup> Reformists like ‘Abduh assert that Islam will have no dealing with *taqlīd*, against which they campaign relentlessly to break its power over people’s minds and eradicate its deep-seated influence. To them, Islamic teachings also encourage people to move away from their clinging attachment to the world of their fathers and their legacies, indicting as stupid and foolish the attitude of those who always want to know what their predecessors said. Further, in the reformists’ viewpoint, Islamic teachings reprove the slavish imitation of the ancestors which characterizes religious leaders, with their instinct to hold to tradition-sanctioned ways, saying, as they do: “Nay! We will follow what we found our fathers doing” (31: 21), and “We found our fathers so as a people and we will stay the same as they” (43: 22).<sup>109</sup>

The reformists’ rejection of *taqlīd* is due to both its mindless conformism and the deliberate support given to social and political structures which obstruct progress and personal initiative in the name of a static vision of religion and culture. They regard the religious life of the *muqallid* as only the expression of acquired habits and the passive acceptance of the status quo. Moreover, the reformists think that the *muqallid*’s worship is reduced to verbal formulae which have no profound meaning, and their religious rites dwindle to mechanically repeated acts which have no reforming and sanctifying value.<sup>110</sup>

The criticism of *taqlīd*, which has been the major theme of reform, is based on the spiritual and ethical demands made by the Qur’ān. The Qur’ān contains many statements condemning mindless submission to the *shirk* of those who went before, that is, to their fathers (*ābā’*):

“And when it is said to them: ‘follow what God has sent down,’ they said:

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<sup>108</sup>See *ibid.*, *passim*.

<sup>109</sup>Muhammad ‘Abduh, *Risālat al-Tawhīd*, *op.cit.*, pp. 158-160.

<sup>110</sup>A. Merad, “Iṣlāḥ,” *op.cit.*, p. 152.

'Nay, we shall follow what we found our fathers following.' Even though their fathers did not understand anything nor were they guided." (2: 170);

"And when it is said to them: 'come to what God has sent down, and unto the Messenger,' they say: 'enough for us is that which found our fathers following.' Even though their fathers had no knowledge whatsoever and no guidance." (5: 104);

"And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing, and the sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned" (17: 16)<sup>111</sup>

Apart from the condemnation based on the Qur'ān, *taqlīd* is also criticized for several other reasons as frequently stated by Muḥammad ʿAbduḥ and Rashīd Riḍā in the *Tafsīr al-Manāṭir*. For them, *taqlīd* is strongly discouraged by the Salaf and the first great thinkers. *Taqlīd* is regarded as a source of error, an obstacle to personal meditation (*tadabbur*) on revelation and it encourages a new form of idolatry, that is, the excessive veneration of authorities and masters. It is also seen as a form of following whims (*ittibāʿ al-hawā*) which leads to sectarianism and fanaticism and thought to be a cause of disunity and weakness in the community.<sup>112</sup>

## The Encouragement of *Ittibāʿ* and Condemnation of *Ibtidāʿ*

The reformists' criticism of *taqlīd* does not mean that they wish every Muslim to be a scholar capable of practising *ijtihād*. What is obligatory for Muslims is to meditate on, understand, and receive guidance from the Qur'ān as much as they can. The reformists wish the Qur'ān to be the source of the Muslims' religious life, and they should not be permitted to cling to other sources other than the Qur'ān.<sup>113</sup> Ordinary people are permitted to refer to the scholars (Q: 16:43; 21:7)<sup>114</sup> so as to understand the Qur'ān and the Sunnah but this does not imply they can regard the scholars as

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<sup>111</sup>See the same condemnation in Q: 7:28; 26:74; 31:21; 43: 22-23.

<sup>112</sup>See Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manāṭir*, op.cit., passim.

<sup>113</sup>Ibid., vol. 5, p. 297.

<sup>114</sup>"Ask of those who know the Scripture, if you do not know."

legislators (*shāriʿ ūn*).<sup>115</sup> In this case, the word *ittibāʿ* (active fidelity) is used instead of *taqlīd*. *Ittibāʿ*, the reformists point out, denotes following the religious authorities with knowledge of evidence (*adillah*), whereas *taqlīd* signifies the passive acceptance of dogmas from religious authorities without asking for proof, and without thinking of a persons' right of free examination and personal initiative.<sup>116</sup>

*Ittibāʿ*, according to the reformists, is the attempt to reach authenticity, and it is the opposite of the spirit of heretical innovation (*ibtidāʿ*) resulting from *taqlīd*. *Ittibāʿ* is also the way to approach the Sunnah of both the Prophet and the Salaf, whereas *ibtidāʿ* or *bidʿah* is a deviation from and the antithesis of the Sunnah. Following the Sunnah and avoiding *bidʿah* are canonical obligations, as stated frequently in the Qurʾān and the Sunnah: "O you who believe, obey God and obey the Messenger..." (4:59); "Say: If you love God, follow me, God will love you and forgive your sins" (3: 31). The Prophet said:

"Whoever innovates something which is not in harmony with the principles of our religion, that thing is rejected"<sup>117</sup>;

"Those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must then follow my Sunnah and that of the rightly guided caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties (*muḥdathāt al-umūr*), for every novelty is innovation (*bidʿah*), and every innovation is an error (*ḍalālāh*)."<sup>118</sup>

The Prophet in his sermon also stated:

"The best speech is that embodied in the Book of God, and the best guidance is the guidance given by Muhammad. The most evil affairs are their novelties (*muḥdathātu-hā*), and every innovation (*bidʿah*) is an error."<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup>Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, op.cit., vol.5, pp. 238-239.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., vol. 5, p. 288 and passim.

<sup>117</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in "Kitāb al-Sulḥ," 2499; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in "Kitāb Aqḍiyah," 3242 & 3243; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in "Kitāb al-Sunnah," 3990; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah," 14; *al-Musnad*, in "Bāqī Musnad al-Anṣār," 23311.

<sup>118</sup>See *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in "Kitāb al-Sunnah," 3991; *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah," 95.

<sup>119</sup>See *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah," 45; *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah," 208; *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, in "Kitāb Ṣalāt al-ʿAydaīn," 1560.

The reformists uphold a principle that all *bid'ah* in religious matters, as indicated in the *ḥadīths* are errors. There is no good *bid'ah* (*bid'ah ḥasanah*) in the religion as maintained by some scholars. *Bid'ah* should also be distinguished from *maṣāliḥ mursalah* (overriding importance of public interest) or *istiṣlāḥ* which is held to be among the sources of Islamic law. *Bid'ah*, they define, is an invented religious practice that has the resemblance of lawfulness (*al-shar'īyah*) whose purpose is the excessive (*mubālaghah*) worship of God, or which has a purpose similar to those of the lawful practices;<sup>120</sup> whereas *maṣāliḥ mursalah*, which denotes a textually unrevealed benefit or utility to people inherent in a principle of conduct or judgement, is a legal doctrine held to ensure the benefit to the community concerning *mu'āmalāt* and *ʿādāt*.<sup>121</sup>

*Bid'ah* mostly occurs in the fundamentals of the religion, namely *ʿaqīdah* and *ʿibādah*, which have been thoroughly taught by the Prophet Muḥammad in the prescribed manner and of the non-sensible meaning (*ghayr ma'qūlat al-ma'nā*); while *maṣāliḥ mursalah* concerns *mu'āmalāt* and *ʿādāt* which are non-fundamental and have sensible meaning (*ma'qūlat al-ma'nā*), and only the general principles (*aṣl ʿām*) of which were laid down by the Prophet. Rashīd Riḍā says:

"Creed and ritual were completed in detail so as to permit neither additions nor subtractions, and whoever adds to them or subtracts from them is changing Islam and bringing forth a new religion. As for the rules of *mu'āmalāt*, beyond decreeing the elements of virtue such as the necessity for justice in laws and equality in rights etc. etc..., the Lawgiver delegated the affair in its detailed applications to the leading scholars and rulers, who according to law must possess knowledge and moral probity, to decide by consulting one another what is most beneficial for the community according to the circumstances of the times."<sup>122</sup>

Furthermore, the reformists assert, the purpose of *maṣāliḥ mursalah* is to preserve imperative matters (*amr ḍarūriyy*) and to avoid difficulties (*raf' al-ḥaraj*) as emphasized in the doctrine of *maqāṣid al-shar'fah* for the benefit of the community;

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<sup>120</sup>Based on a definition given by Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī. See al-Shāṭibī, *al-f tīṣām*, ed. Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, n.d), vol. 1, p. 37.

<sup>121</sup>See preface by Rashīd Riḍā in *ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 6; and al-Shāṭibī himself, *ibid.*, vol. 2, pp. 111-112.

<sup>122</sup>As quoted by Malcolm H. Kerr, in *Islamic Reform*, op.cit., p. 188.

whereas *bid'ah* contradicts *maṣāliḥ mursalah*, for it creates hardship by exceeding the limits laid down by God. Moreover, *maṣāliḥ mursalah* concerns the methods (*wasā'il*) approved by the legal maxim "if something is required in accomplishing an obligation, that thing is also considered an obligation."<sup>123</sup> whereas *bid'ah* concerns the objectives (*maqāṣid*) completely designated by God.<sup>124</sup>

Hence, the reformists see no compatibility between *bid'ah* and *maṣāliḥ mursalah* since *maṣāliḥ mursalah* is an instrument used for the benefit of the community, while *bid'ah* destroys the religion. Thus, the reformists insist that in practising the religion, a Muslim should be either *mujtahid* or *muttabf*, not *muqallid* or *mubtadi*.

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<sup>123</sup>"*Mā lā yatimm al-wājib illā bih fa-huwa wājib.*" See for example, Muḥammad Sidqī b. Aḥmad al-Burnū, *al-Wajiz fī ḥdāḥ Qawā'id al-Fiqh al-Kulliyah* (Beirut: Muassasat al-Risālah, 1983), pp. 269-272.

<sup>124</sup>See al-Shāṭibī, *al-ʿtiṣām*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 111-135.

## CHAPTER 2

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### ISLAMIC REFORMISM IN MALAYSIA

#### Islamic Reformism in Malaysia: A Background Review

The current renewed interest in the Islamic ethos and the return to the teachings of the Qur'ān and Sunnah is a worldwide phenomenon. Malaysia with its large population of Muslims has also been swept by this phenomenon. The current rise of Islamic revivalism in Malaysia, in fact, can be traced back to the beginning of the twentieth century. The advent of Islamic reformism in Malaysia (Malaya at that time) is evident in the birth of a monthly Malay periodical *Al-Imam* which made its first appearance in Singapore in 1906. This Islamic reformism has been a great milestone in the history of Islam in Malaysia and thus, it has also become an important subject of study by both Western and local scholars. In examining the essence of Islamic reformism in Malaysia, it is imperative to include its background in the study. The following sections will highlight some important issues which are relevant to the discussion of Islamic reformism in Malaysia.

#### The Legacy of Islamic Traditionalism

One of the major factors which has also been a significant issue in the birth of Islamic reformism in Malaysia is the nature of Islamic traditionalism itself. Islamic traditionalism has been discerned as an obstacle for the Malays to perceive the true and pristine Islam, and is blamed as a cause of rigidity and sluggishness in Malay



society.<sup>1</sup> Despite the fact that Islam has been embraced by the Malays for several centuries, it has apparently failed to transform Malay society into an ideal Islamic society observing all God's commandments, as was successfully done by the Prophet Muhammad to Arab society during his prophethood. It is said that though on the one hand Islam has been a fundamental factor of the Malay worldview, on the other, it has played a limited role in Malay socio-political life. The following sections shall deal with this particular question briefly.

### The Role of Islam in Traditional Malay Society

The Malay Archipelago was part of the Buddhist Sri Vijaya Empire in 9-14<sup>th</sup> centuries before the latter was overthrown by the Majapahit, Java's last Hindu Kingdom. During this period of Indian influence, the Malays were known to have professed Hinduism apart from their previous beliefs in primitive animism. With the advent of Islam which came through several gradual and complex processes, the Malays embraced Islam and gave up their previous Hinduism and animism. This new faith did not only transform key aspects of Malay values and norms, but also became a key factor of Malay self-identity and *weltanschauung*.<sup>2</sup> On this premise, some scholars such as Syed M. Naguib Al-Attas maintain that Islam marked a crucial stage in the modernization of the Malays, and it was Islam that gave new and positive universal values to the Malays.<sup>3</sup> Islam had made some drastic changes to the Malay social stratification system by introducing new Islamic values into Malay culture.<sup>4</sup>

Though Islam has indeed had a great impact on the life of the Malays, it has

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<sup>1</sup>This claim was prevalent in the reformists' early writings in *Al-Imam*. See for example, *Al-Imam*, vol.2, no. 2 (August 1906), pp. 56-63; vol. 2, no. 1 (July 1907), vol. 2, no. 8, (February 1908); pp. 225-260; pp. 25-31; vol. 2, no. 10 (April 1908), p. 327.

<sup>2</sup>W. F. Wertheim, *Indonesian Society in Transition: A Study of Social Change* (The Hague:W. Van Hoeve, 1969), p. 196.

<sup>3</sup>Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas, *Islam dalam Sejarah dan Kebudayaan Melayu* (Petaling Jaya[Malaysia]: Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia, 4<sup>th</sup>ed. 1990), pp. 19-20 & passim.

<sup>4</sup>Mohamed Taib Osman, "Islamization of the Malays: A Transformation of Culture," in Khoo Kay Kim (ed.), *Tamadun Islam di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), pp. 1-8.

had to grapple with traditional norms and practices, commonly referred to as *adat* or customs, that were already well entrenched in Malay culture. The question of *adat* has been a frequently debated issue as it is always perceived to be in opposition to the principles of Islam.<sup>5</sup> The relationship between *adat* and Islam is also dialectical because of continuous ambiguity that has characterized these two mutually related forces. As a result, the Malays have adopted a kind of hybrid Islamic doctrine, consisting of a heavy mixture of both Islamic and un-Islamic practices.<sup>6</sup> For example, the practice of *Adat Temenggung* and *Adat Perpatih*, the two dominant un-Islamic socio-political systems which characterized Malay life before the advent of Islam, are said to have been Islamized with the Islamization of the Malay Archipelago. However, the Islamization process was selective and did not include matters involving inheritance, succession, divorce and family law.<sup>7</sup> As the influence of *adat* upon the society was very strong, the Malays continued to adhere to these *adat* norms, while at the same time acknowledging them to be complementary to Islamic principles.<sup>8</sup> Meanwhile, the deeply-entrenched old beliefs and practices based on primitive animism, such as magic, superstitions, spirit-worship, taboos, the power of shamans and medicinemen (*pawang* and *bomoh*), evil spirit (*jin* and *syaitan*) were also prevalent in Malay society, especially amongst those who live in rural areas.<sup>9</sup> The

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<sup>5</sup>Though many aspects of the *adat* tend to be un-Islamic, it is not totally true to refer to *adat* in general as if it is necessarily always in direct contrast to Islamic law, as is the tendency of many scholars, such as Josselin de Jong, M.B. Hooker. See Josselin de Jong, "Islam versus Adat in Negeri Sembilan," in *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde*, vol. 116, 1960, pp. 158-203; M.B. Hooker, "Adat and Islam in Malaya," in *Bijdragen Tot de Taal-Land-en Volkenkunde*, vol. 130, 1974, pp. 69-90; Cf. Hamka, "Hubungan Timbal Balik antara Adat dan Syarak," in *Pandji Masyarakat*, vol. 9, no. 61.

<sup>6</sup>See Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 12-13.

<sup>7</sup>See Othman Ishak, *Hubungan Antara Undang-Undang Islam dengan Undang-Undang Adat* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1979), pp. 57-105; M.B. Hooker, "Adat and Islam in Malaya," op.cit., pp. 69-89.

<sup>8</sup>This is shown by the well-known Malay sayings: *Adat bersendikan hukum, hukum bersendikan Kitabullah. Kuat adat tak gaduh hukum, kuat hukum tak gaduh adat* (Customary law is based on religious law, religious law is based on the Scripture. If custom is strong, it does not upset religion, if the religion strong, it does not upset custom). See M.B. Hooker, "Adat and Islam in Malaya," op.cit., p. 76; Othman Ishak, *Hubungan antara Undang-undang Islam*, op. cit., p.90.

<sup>9</sup>See for example, R.J Wilkinson, *Malay Beliefs* (London: Luzac & Co., 1906); idem, "Papers On Malay Customs and Beliefs" in *Journal of the Malayan Branch Royal Asiatic Society (JMBRAS)*, vol. 30, pt. IV, 1957, pp. 41-80; R.O.Winstedt, *The Malays: a Cultural History* (London: Routledge And Kegan Paul,

strong Malay attachment to their *adat* values and traditions is shown quite clearly by the popular proverb: "*Biar mati anak jangan mati adat* (Let the child perish but not the *adat*.)"<sup>10</sup> As the *adat* was integral to Malay life, it thus cannot be neglected without misgivings from the community.

The vitality of indigenous culture over Islamic faith in Malay society in fact resulted from circumstances that characterized the early proliferation of Islam in this region. As stated by many scholars, though Islam was well embraced as a new faith by the Malays, it was, to some extent, accepted as a continuation of their previous beliefs and traditions. A. H. Johns, and also the exponents of his theory, maintain that the proselytization of Islam in the Malay Archipelago was influenced by Sūfism, which was also one of the facilitating factors in the successful promulgation of Islam in this region.<sup>11</sup> According to them, the syncretic and mystic background of the Malays before the coming of Islam provided a good basis for Islam to grow in the region. Johns asserts that the Sūfīs taught a complex syncretic theosophy largely familiar to the inhabitants of the region that they made subordinate to the fundamental doctrines of Islam. In this manner, the Sūfī teachers "were prepared to preserve continuity with the past, and to use the terms and elements of pre-Islamic culture in an Islamic context."<sup>12</sup> Sūfism's "moderate" religious demands, incorporation of local pre-Islamic beliefs, and similarity to certain existing spiritual practices are seen as positive factors in the Malays' general acceptance of Islam.<sup>13</sup> It was believed that this compromising

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revised edition, 1950), pp. 18-44; Mohd Taib Osman, *Malay Folk Beliefs: An Intergration of Disparate Elements* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, 1989), pp. 48-74;

<sup>10</sup>Quoted in E. N. Taylor, "The Customary Law of Rembau," in *JMBRAS*, vol. VII, 1929/30, p. 5.

<sup>11</sup>See A. H. Johns, "Sufism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History," in *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, vol. II (1961), no. 2, pp.14 onwards. See also, C. A. Majul, "Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia," in *Silliman Journal*, vol. XI (1964), no. 4, pp. 366-373; S.Q Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963), pp. 93-100; Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, 1969), pp. 5 onwards.

<sup>12</sup>See A. H. Johns, "Sūfism as a Category in Indonesian Literature and History," op.cit., p. 15; C. A. Majul, "Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia," op.cit., p 367.

<sup>13</sup>For most Malays, for instance, the Sūfī recitation of prescribed prayer formulae (*awrād*, sing, *wird*) was regarded as resembling local incantations to the spirit; the trance-inducing Sūfī sessions of the *dhikr* were similar to the seances of the local shaman (*pawang*); and the healing powers attributed to the Sūfī were

attitude was undertaken probably in order to ensure that Islam would be peacefully and easily accepted by the Malays, and to avoid any possibility of violent objection. Hence, the Ṣūfī teachers usually did not attack the previous traditional beliefs and practices, but preferred to redefine them under the covering canopy of Islamic faith.<sup>14</sup> The result then was the absorption of Islamic elements into the society with the old traditional un-Islamic elements very much preserved whether in their original forms or in new altered outlooks.<sup>15</sup> In short, though the introduction of Islam was a break from the complete Indian dominance of previous centuries and weakened the force of traditions and culture, it could not totally displace them. Given the strength and persistence of these un-Islamic values and norms in the Malay culture, it is not to be surprising that the role of Islam in Malay life, in general, is necessarily limited.

### The Nature of Islamic Traditionalism

The limited role of Islam is also said to be result of the nature of Islamic traditionalism itself whose emphasis was on the strict and unquestionable allegiance (*taqlīd*) to the legacy of the past. What is usually referred to by the legacy of the past is Islam's Golden Age before the fall of Baghdad in 1258, which generally denotes Islam after the foundation of various *madhhabs* and after the proclamation of the 'closing of the gate of *ijtihād*,' or, in a more specific way, Islam in the era of *taqlīd*. Islamic traditionalism is believed to have been established in the Malay Archipelago as early as the advent of Islam in this region, for it is believed that the Islam brought by the foreign propagators at that time was Islam in its traditional form. It is known that the mass

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a trait also associated with the traditional village doctor (*bomoh*). See L.Y. Andaya, "Malay Peninsula" in *The Encyclopedia Of Islam*, vol. VI, pp. 234-235.

<sup>14</sup>For examples, as stated by J. F. Cady, "Arab fairies took over for older spirits, and the heroes of the Hindu epics took on Sassanid Persian names; a Ṣūfī pantheistic sect gained wide acceptance for a time in both Malacca and Java under presuppositions not very different from Brahmanism. Adaptable Malay spirits mediums (shamans) managed to find the same stimulation for their magical capacities under the Islamic regimen of austerity, fastings, and abstinence which the older Hindu rituals had previously provided." See J. F. Cady, *Southeast Asia: Its Historical Development* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 170.

<sup>15</sup>On this subject, see for examples, R. O. Winstedt, *The Malays: a Cultural History*, op.cit., pp. 18-44; Wilkinson, "Papers on Malay Customs and Beliefs," op.cit., pp. 41-80.

conversion of Malays to Islam took place in the 13<sup>th</sup> century, though Islam was said to have arrived in this region earlier.<sup>16</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> century marked a decline in the history of Islam with the fall of Islamic Empire to the Mongols, but for the Malays, this century had been a great milestone since the mass conversion of the Malays took place then. Many scholars contended that after the destruction of Baghdad in 1258, the activity of propagating of Islam had been heightened, especially in Southeast Asia, including the Malay Archipelago, and this task was undertaken mostly by Ṣūfī propagators.<sup>17</sup> Since Ṣūfī preachers played a significant role in converting the Malays to being Muslims, it is inevitable that Islamic traditionalism was passed on to the Malays, as the Ṣūfīs were traditionalists.

It seems possible to postulate that the establishment of Islamic traditionalism in the society rests mostly on the type of Islamic teachings brought by the Ṣūfīs and adopted by the Malays. In general, the Islam brought to the Malays was an orthodox Islam of the Sunnī sect, adopting the laws of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, and practising various Ṣūfī orders (*ṭarīqah*), such as the Qādiriyyah, the Naqshabandiyyah and the Aḥmadiyyah.<sup>18</sup> The adopted Sunnī schools of theology were both the Ashʿarī and the Māturīdī, whose greater emphasis was on the doctrine of the Twenty Qualities of God. The most significant in-depth work on the doctrine, that is, al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-*

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<sup>16</sup>The earliest date identified by the historians was 674 A. D. See S.Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 37-70; idem, "Two Letters From Maharaja To the Khalifah," in *Islamic Studies*, vol. 2, 1963, pp. 121-141. According to the historians, the spread of Islam in the Malay Archipelago can be divided into three phases: The first phase is known as a visiting phase, in which the earliest contact had taken place, according to Fatimi, since the period of *Khulafā' al-Rāsyidīn*. The second phase is a placement stage, also known as an incubation phase. This stage occurred within the period of the Umayyads and ʿAbbāsids before the 13th century. The third phase is a mass conversion phase which took place after the fall of Baghdad in the 13th century. Within this last stage Islam proliferated widely among the Malays and was embraced by all of them. See, S.Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, op.cit., in Chapter IV. Cf. Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Preliminary Statement on a General Theory of the Islamization of the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago*, op.cit., pp.29-30; M. A. Rauf, *A Brief History of Islam with Special Reference to Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 81-85.

<sup>17</sup>This was due to the fact that, as Majul asserts, "the missionary activities of the Sufis represented an attempt, conscious or otherwise, to make up for the political decline of Islamic world, which could have implied at that time the reduction of the territorial gains of Islam. See C. A. Majul, "Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia," op.cit., p 369. S.Q. Fatimi put the emphasis on the same thesis. See S. Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes To Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 92-93.

<sup>18</sup>See Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sufism as Understood and Practised Among the Malays* (Singapore: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute Ltd., 1963), p. 33.



*Barāhīn* had been given various translations and commentaries by local scholars.<sup>19</sup> There was also a wide range of literature on the subject written by local eminent scholars over the 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, and most of these books were taught everywhere in the region.<sup>20</sup> The teaching of the doctrine of the Twenty Qualities of God had later been an important subject of criticism by the reformists who claimed that the teaching of such a doctrine did not give Muslims a clear understanding of the rudimentary creeds of Islam, nor did it strengthen his conviction in God; on the contrary, it gives rise to doubt.<sup>21</sup>

The propagators of Islam were mostly followers of the Shāfiʿī school of law (*madhhab*), and so the natural choice of Islamic law for the Malays is the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*.<sup>22</sup> The Shāfiʿī school of law has been generally accepted as an official *madhhab* by the Malays.<sup>23</sup> It is believed that the legal thought of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* began with the teaching of Islamic law (*fiqh*) based on al-Nawawī's famous legal manual *Minhāj al-Tālibīn*. It is also said that teaching of this book started as early as the 13<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. in the early development of Islam in the region.<sup>24</sup> Later, the other major *fiqh* books of the *madhhab* were also taught.<sup>25</sup> In addition, local scholars

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<sup>19</sup>Among the major exegesis were Muhammad Zain Faqih Jalaluddin Ashi's *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*, written in 1757; Abdul Samad Falimbani's *Zuhurat al-Murīd fī Bayān Kalimat al-Tawhīd*, written in 1764, and Sheikh Nawawi Banten's *Dharfat al-Yaqīn*.

<sup>20</sup>Such as *Sirāj al-Hudā* written by Muhammad Zainuddin Sambawi, *Aqīdat al-Nāijīn* written by Zainal Abidin Muhammad Fatani, and *al-Durr al-Thamīn* written by Sheikh Daud Fatani.

<sup>21</sup>Hamka, *Prinsip dan Kebijaksanaan Dakwah Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Melayu Baru, 1982), pp. 240-241.

<sup>22</sup>It was maintained by the scholars that most propagators were the Arabs of Hadramaut and Muslims of Gujerat who belonged to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. See C. A. Majul, "Theories on the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia," op.cit., pp. 338-345; G. E. Marrison, "Persian Influences in Malay Life," in *JMBRAS*, vol. XXVIII, pt. 1, 1955, pp. 52-54; S. Q. Fatimi, *Islam Comes to Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 33-36.

<sup>23</sup>See for example, M. A. Rauf, *A Brief History of Islam with Special Reference to Malaya*, op.cit., p. 85.

<sup>24</sup>See K. H. Sirajuddin `Abbas, *Tabaqat al-Shafi'iyyah: Ulama Shafi'i dan Kitab-kitabnya dari Abad ke Abad* (Jakarta: Pustaka Tarbiyah, 1975), p. 201.

<sup>25</sup>Among them were Al-Nawāwī's *al-Majmūʿ*, al-Shirāzī's *al-Muhadhdhab*, Zakariyya al-Anṣārī's *Fath al-Wahhāb*, Zayn al-Dīn al-Malabarī's *Fath al-Muʿīn*, and the works of Ibn Hajar al-Haithamī, Khaṭīb al-Sharbīnī and al-Ramlī. See Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Pemikiran Umat Islam di Nusantara* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, 1990), pp. 121-134.



also produced a wide range of *fiqh* treatises based on the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*.<sup>26</sup> The teaching of the *fiqh* literature of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* in the traditional *pondok* institutions, *madrasahs* and *suraus* reinforced the Shāfiʿī legal thought among the society. In addition to this, the implementation of the rulings of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* in local legal compendia, such as in the *Undang-undang Melaka*, *Hukum Kanun Pahang*, *Undang-undang 99 Perak* and many others strengthened the establishment of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* in this region.<sup>27</sup>

As the influence of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* was entrenched in the society, the influence of other *madhhabs* had no place in it, and adopting the different rulings of the latter would be regarded as strange and, to some extent, a heresy. This attitude has been criticized by the reformists who emphasize the freedom to choose rulings from any authoritative *madhhab* by using the *tarjih* method and rejecting the need of being bound to a specific *madhhab*. The methods of teaching of *fiqh* in the traditional *pondoks* and *madrasahs* which are based on the *taqlīd* approach, such as using of the *tadah kitab* method (reading the book) and *hafaz* (memorizing), have also been a significant target of the reformists' criticism. The reformists allege that those methods have only nourished the *taqlīd* culture in the society and hindered the ability of performing *ijtihād*.<sup>28</sup>

Sūfism also played a vital role in characterizing Islamic traditionalism in Malay society, and as mentioned earlier, it was also one of the facilitating factors in

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<sup>26</sup>For example, in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, the eminent local scholars such as Nuruddin Raniri, Abdul Rauf of Singkel and Jalaluddin Tursani had respectively written some important works on *fiqh*. Raniri wrote his famous *al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm*, a book which is identified as the first work of *fiqh* written in Malay; Abdul Rauf of Singkel wrote *Mir'at al-Tullāb*, while Jalaluddin Tursani produced *Safinat al-Hukkām*. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a lot more *fiqh* books were produced, such as Muhammad Arshad Banjari's *Ṣabīl al-Muhtadīn*, Daud Fatani's *Furūḥ al-Masā'il*, *Munyat al-Muṣallī* and *Bughyat al-Tullāb*, Ismail Dawud Fatani's *Maṭlaʿ al-Badrāyn*, Abdul Samad b. Muhammad Saleh's *Kifāyat al-Awwām* and *Hidāyat al-Tālim* and others. See Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Pemikiran Umat Islam*, op.cit., pp. 138-140.

<sup>27</sup>M.B. Hooker, *Islamic Law In Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 11-13; Yussof Iskandar, "Islam Dalam Sejarah Perundangan Melaka Di Abad ke 15/16" in *Islam Di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1978), pp. 3-15.

<sup>28</sup>On the teaching methodology used in the *pondok*, see Che Omar Awang, "The Methodology of Teaching in Islam with Special Reference to the Traditional Educational Methods in Malaysia." Unpublished Ph.D Thesis of Edinburgh University, 1996, pp. 242-250.

successful promulgation of Islam in this region. It is believed that some form of mysticism was introduced simultaneously into the Malay Archipelago with the introduction of Islam.<sup>29</sup> According to Syed Naguib al-Attas, the foundations of Ṣūfism had already been well laid in Malacca as early as 1488, for the Sultan of Malacca himself, i.e. Sultan Mansur Shah, at the time was the disciple of a mystic.<sup>30</sup> However, he is certain "that Ṣūfism and its orders must already have been well established in the Eastern Archipelago, particularly in Sumatera between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, for within that time we already find men whose comprehension of the doctrines of the Ṣūfī, and of Muslim theology and metaphysics, revealed a maturity found only within a society in which Ṣūfism flourishes."<sup>31</sup> Hamzah Fansuri (16/17 century), Shamsuddin Sumatrani (d. 1630), Nuruddin Raniri (d. 1661) and Abdul Rauf of Singkel (d. 1693), were among the great figures of Malay Ṣūfīs who taught various Ṣūfī doctrines and had a large circle of disciples in their respective orders.<sup>32</sup> Doctrines such as the Unity of Existence (*Waḥdat al-Wujūd*) introduced by Ibn al-<sup>c</sup>Arabi (d. 1165), the Perfect Man (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) indoctrinated by <sup>c</sup>Abd al-Karīm al-Jīlī (d. 1365) and the Seven Degrees (*al-Marātib al-Sab<sup>c</sup>ah*) taught by Ibn Fadl Allāh al-Burhanpūrī (d. 1029) were among the famous ones which had a great influence on the Malays.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup>Snouck Hurgronje, *The Achenese* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1906), pp. 9-10. It was also said that the Ṣūfism was spread in this region by a Ṣūfī preacher Sheikh Abdullah Arif in 1165 in Samudera by the teaching of *Nur Muhammad* doctrine through his book *Bahr al-Lahut*. See W. Muhd Shaghir Abdullah, *Perkembangan Ilmu Tasawuf dan Tokoh-tokohnya di Nusantara* (Surabaya: Penerbit Al-Ikhlās, 1980), pp. 10-13.

<sup>30</sup>Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Ṣūfism*, op.cit., p. 22. It is recorded in the *Sejarah Melayu* that when a book dealing with mysticisms called *al-Durr al-Manzūm* written by Abu Ishāq in Mekka was brought to Malacca, it was received with a great pomp and respect, and drummed all the way to the Malacca Court. Sultan Mansur Shah himself took a keen interest in the study of this book, and he had it sent to Pasai, the centre of religious learning, to Makhdum Patakan who was instructed to interpret its inner meaning. See William Shellabear (ed.), *Sejarah Melayu or Malay Annals* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, new ed. 1977), pp. 125-130

<sup>31</sup>Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Ṣūfism*, op.cit., p. 22.

<sup>32</sup>Among these figures, Hamzah Fansuri was the most celebrated Malay mystic first mentioned in the chronicles of Malay mysticism, who can be regarded as a veritable Ibn <sup>c</sup>Arabi of the Malays. See *ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>33</sup>Ibn al-Arabi's Unity of Existence and al-Jili's Perfect Man doctrines were spread in the Malay Archipelago by Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin Sumatrani, while al-Burhanpuri's Seven Degrees was disseminated by Nuruddin Raniri and Abdul Rauf of Singkel. Treatises on the respective doctrines can be found in various writings, such as Hamzah Fansuri's *Shurb al-<sup>c</sup>Ashiqān* and *Marātib al-Wujūd*, Shamsuddin Sumatrani's *Nūr al-Ḥaqqā'iq*, Nuruddin Raniri's *Ḥill al-Zill* and *Ma'rifat al-Thānīyah*, and Abdul Rauf's *Umdat al-Muḥtājīn*. As the doctrine of the Unity of Existence had been a controversial subject, Hamzah

The strong influence of Sūfism among Malay Muslim society was also seen in the spread of various Sūfī orders (*turuq*, sg. *tarīqah*) between the 16<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century in the region, such as the *Qādiriyyah*, *Rifā'iyyah*, *Shattāriyyah*, *Shādhiliyyah*, *Naqshbandiyyah*, *Samaniyyah* and *Ahmadiyyah* orders.<sup>34</sup> Each order had its own leader (*shaykh*) and practised certain religious exercises involving particular rites, such as *rātibs*, *awrāds* and *dhikrs*. Meanwhile, orthodox Sūfism based on al-Ghazzālī's (d.1111) thought became very popular and propagated by most of the local scholars. His great treatise *Ihyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* was taught everywhere and was given various translations by several eminent local scholars including Daud Fatani (d. 1845) and Abdul Samad Falimbani (b. 1700).<sup>35</sup> Though most scholars were keen to adopt orthodox Sūfism, at the same time they also belonged to a particular Sūfī order, and it was unusual to see any scholar who was not also associated with specific order.

With the mystical background that Malay society had before the advent of Islam, it is understandable how Sūfism has had a tremendous influence on Malay Muslim society. Regardless of its various doctrines of metaphysics, the Sūfī's mystical elements such as the miraculous power (*karāmah*) of the *shaykhs* and *walīs*, and supernatural powers of those performing certain spiritual exercises and *dhikrs* were among the popular factors attracting the Malays.<sup>36</sup> The entrenched influence of Sūfism in the Malay Muslim community was however, claimed as the main cause of the Malay

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and Shamsuddin were regarded as "heterodox" mystics and as such, most of their works were thrown into flames by their persecutors. Nuruddin Raniri was among those who severely criticized Hamzah Fansuri and Shamsuddin, while Abdul Rauf was never explicitly found to criticize the latter, but implied in much of his writings which condemn their 'heresies'. See Syed Naguib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sūfism*, op.cit., pp. 25-29.

<sup>34</sup>The *Qādiriyyah* order was the oldest, fostered by Hamzah Fansuri (16/17 century). The *Rifā'iyyah* was founded by Nuruddin al-Raniri (d. 1661), while the *Shattāriyyah* was spread by Abdul Rauf of Singkel (d. 1693) and Ibrahim Kurani (d. 1690). Later, new orders appeared, such as the *Shādhiliyyah*, founded by Abdul Malik b. Abdullah (d. 1736) of Terengganu, the *Naqshabandiyyah* propagated by Ismail Khalidi (d. 1844) of Minangkabau, the *Sammāniyyah* spread by Abdul Samad al-Falimbani (b. 1700), and the *Ahmadiyyah* disseminated by Tuan Tabal (d. 1875). See Wan Muhd Shaghir Abdullah, *Perkembangan Ilmu Tasawuf*, op.cit., pp. 10-21. At present days, the *Qādiriyyah* and the *Naqshabandiyyah* are the most popular orders practised among the Malays. See Naguib al-Attas, *Some Aspects of Sūfism*, op.cit., pp. 51-67.

<sup>35</sup>Daud Fatani had translated parts of al-Ghazzālī's voluminous *Ihyā'* in his *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah* and *Minhāj al-'Abidīn*, while Abdul Samad Falimbani did so in his *Hidāyat al-Sālikīn*.

<sup>36</sup>M. A. Rauf, *A Brief History of Islam*, op.cit., p. 83.

Muslims' backwardness and stagnation. This claim was of course made by the reformists who perceived that the Ṣūfīs' concern with various doctrines of metaphysics, philosophy and theosophy, and high adoration of the *shaykhs* and *walīs* with their miraculous power had usually led them to their abandoning of the more significant matters especially regarding the interests of the *ummah*. According to them, the Ṣūfīs' 'negative' attitude towards mundane life had paralyzed the development of the Muslim community.<sup>37</sup> Moreover, many Ṣūfī doctrines and practices were considered as heresies and blameworthy innovations as they were allegedly in contrast with the original teachings of Islam.<sup>38</sup>

### The Role of the Religious Establishment

It is known that Islam was disseminated in the Malay Archipelago at the outset by foreign preachers, mostly from Arab countries, Persia and India. This task was later perpetuated by local scholars. Most of the Malay religious scholars undertook their religious studies in the Middle East, particularly in Mecca and Cairo.<sup>39</sup> There they enriched their religious knowledge from teachers of various disciplines of Islamic studies for several years before returning to their homeland. Returning as Malay Muslim scholars, they were highly revered by the locals and regarded as superior and possessing high status, authority and great influence in the society. Some became

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<sup>37</sup>Mahayudin Haji Yahaya, *Islam di Alam Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1998), pp. 122-123, 177.

<sup>38</sup>Abdul Fattah Haron Ibrahim, *Beberapa Masalah Utama dalam Tasawuf* (Kuala Lumpur: Bahagian Hal Ehwal Islam Jabatan Perdana Menteri, 1989), pp. 21-34.

<sup>39</sup>The reasons for choosing Mecca and Cairo, or, to be more specific, the Masjid al-Haram and al-Azhar mosque (later university) were various, partly because they were regarded as the most reputable centres of Islamic studies, and also because they were dominated by the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. The latter seemed to be an important criterion for the Malay students as they were of the same *madhhab*, and when they returned to their motherland they would teach Islamic teachings based on this *madhhab* as required by the society. Before the *Muwahhidūn* revolution led by the reformist Muhammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1792), Mecca was under the rule of the Ottomans who were of the Hanafī *madhhab*. However, Mecca itself at that time remained on the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* (see Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka In The Latter Part Of The 19th Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1970), p. 182). After the *Wahhābī* revolution which took place in 18th century, the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* was replaced by the Hanbalī *madhhab*. After that, the Malay students who previously converged on Mecca, went more frequently to the al-Azhar, which is distinguished by Hurgronje as "the Athens of Shāfiʿī learning." See *Ibid.*, p. 185.

*Qāḍī*, *Muftī* and religious teachers, while others became *Imāms* and *Khātib*s of mosques. Appointed by the rulers, they had a special position in the social hierarchy, equal to that of dignitaries and officials. Besides them, the *Hājis* i.e. those who had performed *ḥajj* in Mecca, and the *Lebais*, i.e. the pious men in the society, also held high positions and had their own influence on people especially in the rural community.<sup>40</sup> Despite high status, the religious establishment maintained a good relationship with the society, and became an important reference for help and advice. They maintained worship, taught Islamic lore, presided over ceremonies of marriage and death, arbitrated disputes, healed the sick, controlled communal property and collected *zakāh*.<sup>41</sup>

The religious establishment also held the responsibility of carrying out *da'wah* and propagating the teachings of Islam, their most significant role in the society. In the beginning, their teaching took place in mosques, *suraus* (prayer houses) or in their own houses. On the eve of the 17th century the system of religious education was institutionalized in the *madrasah*,<sup>42</sup> adopting the *kuttāb* institution mushrooming in Western Asia at the time.<sup>43</sup> This educational process became more advanced with the emergence of *pondok*<sup>44</sup> institutions in the late 18th and early 19th century. The knowledge taught here consisted of all aspects of Islam such as theology, Islamic law, Sūfism, Arabic and others, and it employed the method of recitation and exegesis by a teacher as the principal means of imparting such knowledge to the students. The

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<sup>40</sup>S. Husin Ali, *Malay Peasant Society And Leadership* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 108-109; Roy F. Allen, "Social Theory, Ethnography And The Understanding Of Political Islam In Southeast Asia" in *Islam In Southeast Asia*, edited by M.B. Hooker (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1983), pp. 79-80.

<sup>41</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>42</sup>*Madrasah* is a type of religious school modelled on Arab prototype, known as *pesantren* in Jawa and *rangrang* in Sumatra.

<sup>43</sup>Ahmad Shalaby, *History of Muslim Education* (Beirut: Dar al-Kashshaf, 1954), pp. 16-23.

<sup>44</sup>*Pondok* is a type of (usually rural) religious school, in which the pupils resided in small huts around the house of their teacher. On the subject of *pondok*, see for example, Abdul Rashid Haji Ahmad, "Kedudukan Pondok Dalam Masyarakat di Kelantan, unpublished academic exercise, University of Malaya, 1966; R. L. Winzeler, "Traditional Islamic Schools in Kelantan," in *JMBRAS*, vol. 47, part 1, 1975; Shafie Abu Bakar, "Ke Arah Pembaikan Dan Pengembangan Sistem Pondok Di Malaysia" in *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, no. 2, Oct. 1984; Abdullah Ishak, "Ke Arah Mengembalikan Identiti Pengajian Pondok Di Malaysia." Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Dept. of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, 1989.



students were both local and people from various places of the region. The teachers, as well as the *pondok* students were respected by the community for their religious scholarly pursuit and also for their religious character. Having completed their religious studies and being recognized by society as scholars, they returned to their home towns and established their own *pondoks* or *madrasahs* there. Until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the *pondok* institution was the most popular religious educational system which could be found almost everywhere in this country. The *pondok* institution was recognized as significant in propagating Islam in the region apart from reinforcing the Islamic traditionalism in the society. It is also a fact that the popularity of this institution was a credit to the traditional religious scholars in maintaining their reputation among the Malay Muslim community.

The position of the religious establishment was strengthened by the British interference. Following the introduction of a centralised bureaucratic by the British for the governance of the Malay states, the sultans in the last two decades of the 19th century created a religious administration modelled on this. By the second decade of the 20th century, most states had some form of centralised Islamic bureaucracy. This newly formalised religious hierarchy further strengthened the long-standing, mutually supportive relationship between the religious and secular Malay authority. The interdependent relationship between these two groups was a well known aspect of political and religious development in Malaya. In this context, W.R. Roff says, "a direct effect of colonial rule was thus to encourage the concentration of doctrinal and administrative religious authority in the hand of a hierarchy of officials directly dependent on the sultans for their position and power".<sup>45</sup> This alliance had also, as expressed by L. Y. Andaya, "guaranteed that any Islamic reform movement which threatened to weaken the established religion would find little favour among the ruling classes."<sup>46</sup> Because of the traditionally supportive role between the religious and secular authorities, the reformists' attacks on the religious officialdom were

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<sup>45</sup>W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, second edition, 1994), p. 72.

<sup>46</sup>L.Y. Andaya, "Malay Peninsula," in *The Encyclopedia Of Islam*, op.cit., vol VI, p. 235.

viewed as attacks on the ruling class, which would necessarily find a very strong resistance.<sup>47</sup>

Regardless of this resistance, they were endlessly challenged by the reformists. Besides claiming that the traditional religious elite were responsible for the backwardness of Malay society because of their 'improper' teachings of Islam, the reformists also criticised the *pondok* educational system. The reformists believed that the system did not contribute to the development of Malay Muslim society since the religion was studied here according to the old traditional methods based on the *taqlīd* approach.<sup>48</sup> They also made a claim that the traditional religious establishment, including the *pondok* teachers were not genuine scholars and not knowledgeable for they made some distortions, falsehoods and deviations in the teachings of Islam. They alleged that the *pondok* students were not real seekers of truth as they mainly aimed for mundane rewards by accruing donations from the society by participating in religious functions. Thus, according to the reformists, the *pondok* teachers only deserved to be labelled as "the hawkers of the religion,"<sup>49</sup> whilst the *pondok* graduates were called "*lebai pondok*." Nevertheless, such attacks failed to weaken the forcefulness of the traditionalists' influence among the masses because of their traditional ties with the existing secular authorities.

## The Impact of Colonialism

The colonization of Malaya by the Portuguese (1511-1641), Dutch (1641-1824) and British (1824-1957) had some impact on Islam and the Malay cultural life. However, it was the British occupation that was of greatest significance for subsequent developments in Malaya especially in shaping the course of Islam in Malay society. British policies, when compared to those of the Portuguese and the Dutch, were more

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid., p. 237.

<sup>48</sup>See *Al-Imam*, 11, iv, December 16, 1927, p. 188.

<sup>49</sup>William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 85; *Al-Ikhwan*: 2, oct. 1927; 172-173.



sympathetic to the Malays and Islam. The British policies, as stated by Roff, were based on a mutually profitable alliance with the Malay ruling class, particularly with the individual rulers of the state and their aristocratic establishments.<sup>50</sup> Nonetheless, the rulers or Sultans, the traditionally undisputed leaders of Malay culture and religion, became only symbols of the Malay political sovereignty and without any authority over decision making.<sup>51</sup> This was because of the Pangkor Engagement in 1874 whereby the Sultans had to receive British Residents or advisers whose advice had to be accepted in all matters except matters affecting religion and customs.<sup>52</sup>

Though the symbiotic relationship between the British and Malay ruling class had deprived the Malay Sultans of much of their policy-making or decision making power, it was furthered with a tact which carefully preserved the fiction that the Sultans were autonomous rulers acting under advice from Residents who were in some sense their servants.<sup>53</sup> Thus, within Malay society itself, the rulers not only remained supreme, but had their position considerably strengthened by the improvement, under the aegis of British, of the centralized apparatus of government, by the reduction of previously competitive territorial chiefs to the status of titled pensioners or government-paid bureaucrats, and by the strengthening of their customary but previously frequently unexercised control over religion.<sup>54</sup>

The British policy of non-interference in matters regarding religion and customs, however, proved impossible to uphold in practice as the creation of a modern governmental administration and other reforms by them invariably meant that they had to regulate many aspects of indigenous life, including religion and customs. Thus,

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<sup>50</sup>William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 250.

<sup>51</sup>Syed Husin Ali, *The Malays: Their Problems and Future* (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Asia, 1981), p. 27.

<sup>52</sup>According to Clause VI of the Pangkor Engagement 1874, "the Sultan shall receive and provide a suitable residence for a British Officer to be called Resident who shall be accredited to his Court and whose advice must be asked and acted upon in all questions other than those touching Malay religion and customs." Quoted in Sir William George Maxwell and William Summer Gibson, *Treatises and Engagements Affecting the Malay States and Borneo* (London: Jas. Truscott & Son Ltd., 1924), pp. 28-30.

<sup>53</sup>William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 250.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid.

even if, under the engagement, matters affecting religion and customs were placed under the jurisdiction of the Sultans, in the end, they were also controlled and regulated by the British.<sup>55</sup> By managing matters concerning Islam ingeniously in the service of British interests, the officials were able to placate the Malay Muslims, despite some intermittent and minor confrontations with Malay Muslim groups in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>56</sup>

Under the British administration, the status and role of Islamic law was made subservient to British legal codes and enactments, and so too were the status and power of Sultans who were subject to the control of British advisers. Islam became highly bureaucratised, and this occurred with the introduction of written constitutions, codification of the oral *adat* and the *Sharfah*, and legislation on other matters in all the Malay states.<sup>57</sup> The official position of *Mufti*, *Qāḍī* and *Imām* were also introduced as well as some form of organised class of '*ulamā'* who were formally engaged in government offices at state levels. A centralised religious authority, the Majlis Agama or Religious Council was also formed to monitor Islamic affairs in all states.<sup>58</sup> In some ways, it should be noted that British rule did assist the development of Islam in the Malay society. For example, administrative reforms led to the coordination and regulation of Muslim institutions such as the collection of *zakāt*, the Islamic court system and pilgrimage procedures. However, the extent of British control in Malay Muslim affairs also meant that much of the influence of the Islamic law on Malay life was curtailed.<sup>59</sup>

Furthermore, the British policies on ethnic communities, and the economic and education system generated a feeling of cultural insecurity among the Malays. One of

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<sup>55</sup>Moshe Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya Policies and Implementation* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1979), p. 54.

<sup>56</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia*, op.cit., p. 20.

<sup>57</sup>Moshe Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions*, op.cit., pp. 92, 119 onwards.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., pp. 93-109.

<sup>59</sup>Ibid., pp.141-144.



the major outcomes of the British occupation in Malaya was the emergence of a multiracial society which resulted in the importation of immigrant labourers, namely the Chinese and Indians, on a large scale into Malaya from China and the Indian subcontinent to work in the tin industry and on the rubber plantations. Inasmuch as these immigrant groups were principally brought in to serve British economic interests, they were not integrated into the mainstream of the indigenous Malay environment. As a result, the Malays, Chinese and Indians were left much to themselves within their ethnic enclaves, in residence, type of work and education, and this eventually retarded inter-ethnic relations. The unrestricted entry of immigrant labourers increased the size of the Chinese and Indian communities in the peninsula. In the first three decades of the twentieth century, the Malays found themselves outnumbered by this open door immigration policy. In the 1921 census, the Malays had become a minority in their own country, constituting less than half of the total population.<sup>60</sup>

One of the major impacts of the British control of Malaya was the relegation of the Malay population to the bottom rung of the economic ladder. British policies were meant to preserve the Malay way of life, but these policies also consigned the Malays to the lowest strata of economic life. The history of British policy in the peninsula is one of keeping the Malay population in the farm, while they exploited the rich natural resources of the country. Though it was undeniable that some Malays later had opportunities to participate in the modern economy, on the whole, the British view was that the Malays should limit their horizons to pursuits such as agriculture and fishing. The British believed that the Malays had no inclination nor the necessary traits to succeed in Malaya's modern economy. A stereotype was accepted by many colonial administrators, which portrayed the Malays, despite their charm, as indolent, fun loving, shiftless and resistant to change and progress, and lacking in the ability to be successful businessmen or wage earners.<sup>61</sup> The Malays, however, would have been better off economically if they had produced more, of greater variety and of more

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<sup>60</sup>L. A. Mills, *British Rule in Eastern Asia* (London, Oxford University Press, 1942), p. 25.

<sup>61</sup>William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 25; Frank Swettenham, *Malay Sketches* (London: J. Lane, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1913), pp. 2-3.

value, from the land. Some colonial administrators, such as Hugh Clifford (1866-1941) who served as Governor of Straits Settlement from 1897 to 1909, felt that the purpose of preserving the culture of the Malays was not at odds with improving their economic position. Clifford argued that the answer was to make the Malays better and more efficient farmers. Nonetheless, his view that the standard of living of the Malays could be raised while they remained primarily rural was not reflected in administrative policies and there was little serious effort to improve and modernize the Malay agricultural sector of the economy.<sup>62</sup>

With the rapid growth of the surplus economy, the British carried out several development projects in areas of economic activity, namely around mining and rubber estate areas, and these included roads, railways, medical services, electricity, telephones and so forth. As these infrastructural facilities were only concentrated in areas whose inhabitants were mostly non-Malays, the facilities were not beneficial to the Malays. As these areas grew and prospered, the Malays benefited very little from that progress and they were outstripped economically in their own country by immigrant races.<sup>63</sup> While the new urban society became richer and was provided with all the material comforts of civilization, the rural Malays remained in poverty. The Malays had a money economy thrust upon them, but they had little means of earning the same money to buy the goods that came with a money economy. While the British were deliberately creating a modern economic system consonant with world commercial development, the Malays were driven more into the backwoods of economic progress.<sup>64</sup> L. A. Mills sums it up aptly when he states that, "when the British came, the Malay was a poor man in a poor country; when they left he was a poor man in a rich country."<sup>65</sup>

As regards to education, traditionally, the first formal education for Malay

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<sup>62</sup>Chai Hon Chan, *The Development of British Malaya, 1896-1909* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1964), pp. 234-235, 286.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid, p. 274.

<sup>65</sup>L. A. Mills, "British Malaya," in *JMBRAS*, vol. XXXIII, part 3, 1961, p. 78

children was primarily religious, beginning in the *suraus* or mosques, and later moving to the *pondoks*. Under British rule, the educational policy toward the Malay community reflected the facade of indirect rule and attempted to preserve Malay life and culture. Two educational systems evolved: one for the Malay elite in whose name the British ruled, and one for the Malays whose culture they preserved. The need for Malay officers in the civil service to facilitate governance in Malaya had led the British to provide English education to selected Malays. The sons of Malay aristocrats and the ruling class were offered facilities and opportunities to acquire English education to the highest level, including tertiary education in Britain. This chosen lot, equipped with English education, assumed positions in the civil service or royal courts. For the rural Malays, the British had provided them with vernacular education which aimed at only the achievement of literacy and simple skills in arithmetic that were "sufficient for the ordinary requirements of Malay boys who will become bullock-wagon drivers, padi growers, fishermen, etc."<sup>66</sup>

The British believed that the expectations of the Malays should not be unduly raised and that they were best suited to agricultural occupations. The British administrators viewed education for Malays as a means to reorientate and prepare them to accept their place in colonial society.<sup>67</sup> Nonetheless, as Roff states, "in fairness it must also be said that many Englishmen, as well as Malays, felt a genuine affection for the values and virtues inherent in Malay rural life and were reluctant to see it radically disturbed, holding that this was against the best interests as well as the wishes of the peasants themselves."<sup>68</sup> The education for Malays in general was thus, in the words of Frank Swettenham (1850-1946), the British Resident in Malaya from 1896 to 1901, "to make the children better farmers rather than offer them any wider views of life. The longer the Malay is kept away from the influence of

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<sup>66</sup>As quoted in William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 26.

<sup>67</sup>Barbara Watson Andaya and Leonard Y. Andaya, *A History of Malaysia* (London: The Macmillan Press Ltd., 1982), p. 231.

<sup>68</sup>William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 25.

civilization the better it will be for him.”<sup>69</sup>

The dualism in the British educational policies, in general, not only contributed to the relative passivity of the Islamic factor in the life of the Malays, but also added a new and unsettling dimension to Malay education in the country and created a cultural schism among the Malays. The Malay aristocracy responded favourably to the opportunity of English education to secure a secular education. Admittedly, this education had tended to further isolate the ruling class from the common Malays. The Malay vernacular education was responded to with a good deal of unpopularity and suspicion. This was because education among the rural Malays had traditionally revolved around the study of Islam, and many parents and religious leaders were highly suspicious of these new secular schools, as they feared that their children would be seduced to embrace the alien faith with which the British were associated.<sup>70</sup> Though these fears were counteracted by adopting the Qur’ān class, the vernacular education to most parents represented government intrusion into a rural value system as well as the loss of necessary labor on the farm.

Generally, the changing circumstances of the Malays during the colonial period, such as the spread of modern bureaucracy, secular educational policies, new forms of economic activity and urbanization, contributed to their consciousness of themselves as an ethnic group *vis-a-vis* others. Against the background of this state of bewilderment and frustration over their general backwardness and plight, came proposals to alleviate their problems from a group of concerned Muslims in the country, i.e. the reformists.

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<sup>69</sup>Frank Swettenham, *British Malaya* (London: John Lane, 1907), p. 53.

<sup>70</sup>William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 26.



## The Emergence of Islamic Reformism in Malaysia

### Islamic Reformism in the Pre-Independence Era

The origin of the Islamic reform movement in Malaya can be traced to the Middle East, i.e. the heartland of Islam, especially during the late nineteenth century when Islam was generally on the decline in the face of Western imperialism. It was there that Islamic reformism emerged. As mentioned earlier, Islamic reformism, which was intensively propagated by its leading figures such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā, principally called for the revitalisation of the *ummah* from being in a state of stagnation to regaining their excellence by returning to a pristine Islam and equipping themselves for the challenges of the modern world. Though the calls to regenerate the Islamic spirit and identity were also pursued by reformists outside the Arab lands, it was the radicalism of al-Afghānī and his followers in particular that deeply touched the Islamic world from the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The dynamism of Islam and the promise of the future which these men conjured up acted like a cleansing wind in much of the Islamic world including Malaysia.

Extensive journeys for religious study in Arabia and Egypt and pilgrimage to Mecca brought Malay Muslims into contact with reformists.<sup>71</sup> The scholars were especially significant because of their exposure to Islamic reformism whilst there and their contribution to the spread of the ideas upon their return to Malaya. In this respect, Egypt, or in particular, the al-Azhar University in Cairo, was particularly important as this centre of highly developed academia was not only regarded as a reputable centre of religious learning, but it had also served as the pivot of Islamic reform ideas. Here, the students had the opportunity to listen directly to ʿAbduh who spread the ideas of reform through his lectures on various religious topics. Consequently, the ideas of Islamic reform found their way into the student body,

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<sup>71</sup>William R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 254. See also, Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "The Middle Eastern Influence on the Development of Religious and Political Thought in Malay Society." Unpublished PhD thesis of the University of Edinburgh, 1994, especially chapters 3 and 5.

which also comprised students from Malaya.<sup>72</sup> At the same level, the pilgrimage to Makkah had its own significance in assisting the spread of reformism in Malaya. In Makkah and Madīnah, the *Hajjis* were exposed to the ideas of Islamic reform which spread widely in Arabia. For the more educated, going to the pilgrimage was also an opportunity to renew contacts with personalities and events in the Muslim world and a time for reflection about the affairs of Muslims back home.<sup>73</sup> Hence, one would find in the writings of some colonial officials a certain suspicion towards returned pilgrims, viewing them as well as the institution of pilgrimage itself as a political danger.<sup>74</sup> Those *Hajjis*, along with the Azharite scholars, brought back Islamic reformism, a commitment to the improvement and intensification of Muslim religious life, a desire to arouse their people from torpor and misguidance to a proper Muslim worship, as well as a commitment to political autonomy.

The key leaders of the Malay reformists, such as Saiyid Shaykh al-Hadi, Shaykh Tahir Jalaluddin, Hj. Abbas b. Mohd. Taha and Mohd Salim Kallali<sup>75</sup> were among those who were directly influenced by the Islamic reform movements in the Middle East of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century as they had spent a considerable part of their lives there, particularly in Cairo and Makkah where they had opportunities to meet and to listen to Muḥammad ʿAbduh, Rashīd Ridhā and other reformist personalities of the local reform movement. Their contribution to the spread of Islamic reformism in the Malay world lay mainly in their role as founders and editors of reformist journals and newspapers at that time, the most notable of which was *Al-Imam*, a monthly periodical founded by al-Hadi in 1906. With the birth of *Al-Imam*, Islamic reformism in Malaysia was clearly and officially discerned. As the organ of an Islamic reform

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<sup>72</sup>Mohammad Aboulkhir Zaki, "Modern Muslim Thought in Egypt and its Impact on Islam in Malaya." Unpublished PhD thesis of University of London, 1965, p. 372.

<sup>73</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia From Revivalism to Islamic State* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993), p. 22.

<sup>74</sup>W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., pp. 38, 71.

<sup>75</sup>On these reformist figures, see for example, Ibid., pp. 59-65; Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism in Malaya: The Life And Thought Of Sayid Syekh Al-Hadi 1867-1934* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 1994).

movement, *Al-Imam* was, to a great extent, similar both in content and form to *Al-Manar*, a periodical published eight years earlier by the Egyptian reformist Rashīd Ridhā, promoting the ideas of Islamic reform of his master Muḥammad ‘Abduh.<sup>76</sup> *Al-Imam* was regarded as the most vocal, radical, and vigorous Malay language periodical, whose birth was ‘a bombshell on the quiet Malayan scene of Islam.’<sup>77</sup> Roff in his oft-quoted book, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, observes that this periodical was “a radical departure in the field of Malay publications, distinguished from its predecessors both in intellectual stature and intensity of purpose and in its attempt to formulate a coherent philosophy of action for a society faced with the need for rapid social and economic change.”<sup>78</sup>

Emerging against the background of a traditional and conservative-oriented Malay society, *Al-Imam* served as an official medium by the Malay reformists in propagating the spirit of Islamic reformism. Though *Al-Imam*’s principal concern was with the religion itself,<sup>79</sup> as the religion is the proven cure for the ills of the Muslim community,<sup>80</sup> it also considerably dealt with matters of politics and social affairs.<sup>81</sup> As regards the religious aspect, *Al-Imam* committed itself to:<sup>82</sup>

1. Preach Islam in its pure and original form;
2. Promote religious knowledge amongst the Muslim community in the Malay world;
3. Encourage intellectual activities amongst the knowledgeable people by

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<sup>76</sup>Abu Bakar Hamzah, *Al-Imam: Its Role in Malay Society 1906 - 1908* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Antara, 1991), p. 1; W.R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 59.

<sup>77</sup>S. H. Tan, “The Life and Times of Sayyid Shaykh al-Hadi.” B. A thesis, University of Malaya, 1961, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup>W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 59.

<sup>79</sup>Ibid, p. 57; Abu Bakar Hamzah, *Al-Imam*, op.cit., p. 29.

<sup>80</sup>*Al-Imam*, vol. 1, no. 1 (July 1906), p. 17.

<sup>81</sup>Abdul Aziz bin Mat Ton, *Politik al-Imam* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka, 2000), pp. 184-297; Abdullah Jaafar, “Al-Imam,” in Khoo Kay Kim, *Sejarah Masyarakat Melayu Modern* (Kuala Lumpur: Universiti Malaya, new. ed. 1985), pp. 102-103.

<sup>82</sup>Abu Bakar Hamzah, *Al-Imam*, op.cit., p. 30.

sponsoring discussions and constructive criticism;

4. Cleanse the existing religious corruption and correct the misconception of Islam as perceived in the Malay world;
5. Fight against all religious innovations imported into Islam in the region; and,
6. Call upon the Rulers and Chieftains to apply Islamic teaching in their practical life so as to become examples for their subjects.

Though the publication of *Al-Imam* survived only for a short period, i.e. from July 1906 until December 1908, it successfully achieved its aim and objectives in disseminating Islamic reformism in the Malay world.<sup>83</sup> The message and mission of *Al-Imam* was constantly continued throughout the time by the reformist group. Various periodicals were published as a continuation of *Al-Imam*. Among them were the periodical *Neracha*, published in Singapore from 1911 to 1915; *Tunas Melayu*, published in 1913 in association with *Neracha*; *Majallah al-Islam*, published in 1914; *Al-Ikhwān*, published in Penang in the period from 1926 to 1931, and *Saudara*, also published in Penang from 1932 to 1941.

The ideas of Islamic reform were not only expressed through the publications of various journals, but were also channelled through the *madrasah* (religious school) system, a system borrowed from Egypt. A number of *madrasahs*, such as Madrasah Al-Iqbal Al-Islamiyyah in Singapore, Madrasah Al-Hadi in Melaka and Madrasah Al-Mashhor in Penang, began to be established introducing a more modern curriculum than that offered by the *pondok* schools. The establishment of *madrasahs* were intended to put into practice the ideas advanced in the reformists' publications. Instruction was by no means confined to Islam, and such modern subjects as mathematics, English, history, business and others were also introduced to prepare a good Muslim to survive and flourish in a modern society.<sup>84</sup> It was an experiment in reconciling religious and

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid, p. 149; Abdullah Jaafar, "Al-Imam," op.cit., pp. 102-103.

<sup>84</sup>See for example, Linda Tan, "Syed Shaykh: His Life and Times," in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh Al-Hadi* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1999) p. 114.

contemporary knowledge. However, due to a lack of funds to run the *madrasahs* most of them were closed<sup>85</sup> and al-Hadi himself, according to one writer, discovered that none of the *madrasahs* had become a fertile ground for propagating Islamic reformism.<sup>86</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the reformists principally called for a return to the true principles of Islam, based on the Qur'ān and Sunnah as the only solution to Malay backwardness. They emphasized the importance of education and modernity for the Malays, and the need for them to eliminate un-Islamic practices in their daily lives. They were particularly incensed at the *'ulamā's* passivity, their failure to perform their role to free Islam from un-Islamic aspects of *adat*, which consequently led to the perpetuation of Malay decadence.<sup>87</sup> The reformists, consequently, attempted to substitute the rudimentary and repetitious theological learning, clouded in a haze of doctrinal misunderstanding and superstitious practice, with a new kind of Islamic teaching based on an intelligent re-appraisal of the truths contained in the Qur'ān and Sunnah, combined with a programme of modern education properly adapted to the pressing needs of the world into which the Malays were emerging.<sup>88</sup> Nonetheless, in pursuing this aim the reformists found themselves in conflict with all the forces of traditionalism, i.e. the rural *'ulamā'* and much of peasant society, the religious hierarchy in the States, and the traditional ruling class.<sup>89</sup>

The root of the conflict between the reformists, who were frequently referred to as the *Kaum Muda* (the Young Faction), and the traditionalists, who reserved for themselves the more respectable appellation of *Kaum Tua* (Old Faction), though expressed in doctrinal and ritual controversies of varying substance, was seen, as Roff

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<sup>85</sup>Madrasah al-Mashhor in Penang was the only one that survived until present days. On this *madrasah*, see for example, Rahim b. Osman, "Madrasah al-Masyhur al-Islamiyah," in Khoo Kay Kim, et.al., *Islam di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1980), pp. 75-85.

<sup>86</sup>Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism*, op.cit., p. 73.

<sup>87</sup>See for example, *Al-Imam*, vol.1 no. 1 (July 1906); and vol. No. 3 (September 1906).

<sup>88</sup>W. R. Roff, "Kaum Muda-Kaum Tua: Innovation and Reaction amongst the Malays," in K. G. Tregonning, *Papers on Malayan History* (Singapore: Journal of Southeast Asian History, 1962), pp.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*

states, in the threat offered by the former to the very basis of customary authority. Cardinal among the principles of the reformists was the contention that man must use his reason to determine the truth about religion as about all else and abjure the blind acceptance of intermediary authority.<sup>90</sup> They believed that the fundamental truth had been set down in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and that in every age these truths had to be applied anew to current conditions. They held that this could best be accomplished through *ijtihād*, which they defined as the examination of the Qur'ān and Sunnah to discover the legal prescriptions and moral teachings contain therein, and through reason, apply them to contemporary situations.<sup>91</sup> The traditionalists, on the other hand, maintained that the human mind is generally incapable of grasping the patterns and intricacies of God's command without a reliable guide. They also perceived that the truth expressed in the teachings of the great Muslim scholars of classical and medieval Islam, including the four major *madhhabs* did not change. They believed that the truth did not ever need to be brought to trial since it was not ever altered by the change of time and conditions. According to them, reason was, in general, limited to the application of the existing teachings of the major *madhhabs* in the special problems of life in any particular period of time.<sup>92</sup>

In maintaining their respective standpoints, both parties came into deep conflict with each other on a wide range of issues, particularly pertaining to doctrinal and ritual, as well as educational, social, economic and political matters. The content of disputes revolved around these issues, which in particular consisted of such questions as those concerning the teaching of the doctrine of God's Twenty Attributes, the propriety of reciting the *talqīn* over the dead at burial and uttering the *niyyah* before the prayer, to the question regarding the permissibility of wearing trousers and ties, the lawfulness of saving bank interest, and the possibility of giving Malay women

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<sup>90</sup>W.R Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p. 77.

<sup>91</sup>See *Al-Imam*, vol. 3, no. 1 (July 1908).

<sup>92</sup>Howard M. Federspiel, *Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1970), p. 48.



the freedom to receive education and participate in social affairs.<sup>93</sup> In these disputes, both parties had strongly insisted on their respective views which were in sharp conflict to each other. The conflict was an obvious manifestation of the clash of paradigms between two major groups in Malay Muslim society. The *Kaum Muda* represented those Muslims with a more intensive experience of metropolitan Islam in attempting to purify ritual and belief from purely local innovations, as well as reformulate Islam in response to the economic and social pressures of contemporary life, while the *Kaum Tua* represented the religious elite and traditional establishment and peasantry in their defence to preserve the orthodoxy of Islam as they had practiced it for centuries, as well as to secure the traditional values of the Malay Muslim society.<sup>94</sup>

The disputes between the *Kaum Tua* and *Kaum Muda* could be seen not only through the columns of the local newspapers and journals, but also at the village level. The effects of the new ideas brought by the *Kaum Muda* among the villagers were considerable. The new ideas did not only receive opposition from the *Kaum Tua*, but also led to serious division among the Malay Muslim society. As Roff stated, it needed only one *haji* to return from the Middle East fired with reformist ideas, or one religious teacher to study at a *Kaum Muda madrasah* in Singapore, Perak or Penang, to divide a village temporarily into two rival factions.<sup>95</sup> It was common then to observe, for instance, the adherents of one side of the factions refusing to pray with the adherents of the other in the mosque. The refusal also extended to weddings and other ceremonies. The schism was particularly pervasive during the first two decades after the launching of *Al-Imam* and it was observed that 'there was hardly a village in Malaya where the Malays did not argue and discuss the teachings of the *Kaum*

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<sup>93</sup>W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., pp. 78-79.

<sup>94</sup>Ibid., p. 79.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

*Muda*.<sup>96</sup> Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, the debates between both factions on certain aspects of Islamic principles had become a common scenario that characterized the Malay Muslim community at large.<sup>97</sup>

The *Kaum Muda*'s criticisms of the *Kaum Tua* was violently opposed by the latter by using arguments or direct use of authority. In order to neutralize the influence of ideas of reform on the society, for instance, the *Kaum Tua* channelled their defence and counter arguments through their own journals and newspapers, such as *Pengasuh*, *Lidah Benar*, *Suara Benar* and *Panduan*.<sup>98</sup> A *fatwa* was also issued denouncing the new ideas as against Islamic teachings, infidel (*kafir*), and similar to that of the Qādiyānī, a deviant sect originating from India.<sup>99</sup> The *Kaum Muda* was also condemned as worse than idolaters and Christians.<sup>100</sup> To check the spread of the reform ideas, the *Kaum Tua* use their authority to forbid reformist leaders from speaking in some mosques, and their periodicals and other publications were officially banned in some states.<sup>101</sup>

Though the conflict between the *Kaum Muda* and *Kaum Tua* was a striking characteristic of Islam in Malaya from the first decade of the twentieth century, the former movement seemed to be declining in the 1930's as it was checked by various factors. The reformist movement was also seen as having failed to win over Islamic traditionalism and create or lead a mass movement among Malays.<sup>102</sup> The major explanation for this was that it had to struggle against Islamic traditionalism which

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<sup>96</sup>W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p.87; Mohd Sarim Mustajab, "Gerakan Islah Islamiyah," in *Malaysia: Sejarah dan Proses Pembangunan* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1979), p. 125.

<sup>97</sup>Mohd. Sarim Mustajab, "Gerakan Islah," op.cit., pp. 124-125.

<sup>98</sup>Ibid., pp. 126-127.

<sup>99</sup>See Jabatan Agama Islam Johor, *Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor yang difatwakan oleh Dato' Saiyid Alwi b. Tahir al-Haddad 1936-1961* (Johor Baharu: Jabatan Agama Islam Johor, 1990), vol. 3, pp. 61-62, 165.

<sup>100</sup>Virginia Thompson, *Postmortem on Malaya* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), p. 304.

<sup>101</sup>W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p.80.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., p. 254.

dominated the Malay Muslims long before the coming of Islamic reformism into Malaya. Islamic traditionalism was advocated by the traditional establishment including religious teachers and '*ulamā*', the traditional Malay chiefs and aristocrats, and the Sultans.<sup>103</sup> To reform would mean to antagonize the establishment. To gain mass support in this situation was an extremely tough task since the *Kaum Tua* held the loyalty of the majority of the Malays, and had power and various means to defend their status quo. In addition, since the traditional religious institutions such as *pondok*, *madrasah* and the mystical orders were all controlled by the *Kaum Tua*, Islamic traditionalism had always been the more influential and dominant force among the Malays.<sup>104</sup> Moreover, the *Kaum Muda* reformist philosophy had to grapple with a culture which, as noted earlier, was influenced by traditional values such as some Hindu aspects of the *adat* and other syncretic *Ṣūfī* practices. The radical nature of the reformists' orientation and virulent attack against the status quo leadership of the time, i.e. the Sultans, *tok guru* and traditional '*ulamā*', naturally were not well received by the society who had given their unquestioning loyalty to the Rulers.<sup>105</sup>

Despite its downturn in the 1930's, Islamic reformism had some positive impact upon Malayan history. For one thing, Islamic reformism generated the emergence of a modern religious elite and intelligentsia who intensively attempted to diagnose the changing circumstances that arose among the Malays due to the modernization process introduced by the British. This emergence of a modern religious elite and intelligentsia was but a clear proof of the success and contribution rendered by Islamic reformism.<sup>106</sup> The reformist movement was also a vital force that successfully awakened Malay political consciousness.<sup>107</sup> It was seen as the first attempt to mobilize public support and was the first uprising against what was perceived as decadence and backwardness,

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<sup>103</sup>Ibrahim Abu Bakar, *Islamic Modernism*, op.cit., p. 171.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>105</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 22-23.

<sup>106</sup>Abu Bakar Hamzah, *Al-Imam*, op.cit., p. 144.

<sup>107</sup>Radin Soenarno, "Malay Nationalism 1900-1945," in *Journal of Southeast Asian History*, v. 1: 1, 1960, pp. 7-11, 32-33.

and the first serious expression of defying authority. It had formally launched an active tradition of Islamic dissent which had been a significant element of future Malay Muslim politics. The force also brought new ideas which were also a vital source of future debates, and above all, it overtly proposed Islam as a significant paradigm in Malay politics and society generally.<sup>108</sup>

Islamic reformism sowed the seeds of nationalism among Malays through the idea of pan-Islam originating from the Egyptian reformists. It is plausible to regard the Islamic reform movement as a crucial transforming element in awakening nationalism among the Malay Muslims in Malaya. The impact of the reformist ideas of the *Kaum Muda* movement and its implication in the construction of the Malay nationalist movement have been well elucidated in Roff's *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*. According to Roff, during the 1925-28 period, the Malay students in Cairo who had had an introduction to anti-colonialist ideas in Egyptian Islamic reform circles, had published two monthly journals, namely, *Seruan Azhar* (1925-28) and *Pilihan Timur* (1927-28). These journals, aside from their concern with religious topics, appeared in a new and aggressive spirit of overt political discussion, which centered around three main concepts: Pan-Islamism, Pan-Malayanism (union between Indonesia and Malaya), and anti-colonial nationalism.<sup>109</sup> On their return to Malaya, they joined the nationalist forces of the secular Malay-educated intelligentsia in fighting for Malayan independence. Islamic reformism was overwhelmed by the spirit of anti-colonial nationalism. The basic orientation of Islamic reform had finally expanded and developed into the Malay-Muslim political organizations such as Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) (1926), Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM) (1938), Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM) (1945), United Malay National Organization (UMNO) (1946), Hizbul Muslimin (HAMIM) (1948), etc. which strived to gain the independence of Malaya from the British.<sup>110</sup> In becoming so, as Roff says, "reformism was losing or shedding much of its religious basis. A new generation of nationalists was appearing. Though

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<sup>108</sup>Mohd Sarim Mustajab, "Gerakan Islah," op.cit., p. 122,134-135.

<sup>109</sup>W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., pp. 88-89.

<sup>110</sup>Mohd. Sarim Mustajab, "Gerakan Islah Islamiyyah," op.cit., pp. 131-135.

they might have obtained their introduction to nationalism in the wider world by way of the Islamic renaissance, they were to pursue their goals largely independently of any avowed religious framework of ideas.”<sup>111</sup>

Although it was the reformists who were instrumental in germinating the seeds of Malay nationalism, it was this same nationalism which held back the growth of Islamic reformism in Malaya. The reason for this was that, according to one writer, even if the defence of both Islam and Malay interests coexisted in the nationalist struggle for independence, the struggle was more ethnic-based, rather than religious.<sup>112</sup> Perhaps, from the point of view of the Muslim reformist movement, much of what they had fought for and sowed during the first half of the twentieth century in Malaya had vanished, or at least was submerged, when the leadership of community was assumed by the Malay leaders with a strong ethnic nationalist tendency, especially under the aegis of the United Malay National Organization (UMNO) after 1946. UMNO was founded as a direct result of Malay opposition to the British proposal of ‘Malayan Union.’<sup>113</sup> Its leadership pledged its commitment to pursue the goals of Malay ethnic nationalism, which meant essentially the educational, economic, social, cultural and political upliftment and dominance of the Malay community in Malayan affairs. Although UMNO initially had a Department of Religious Affairs and Education, the latter only played a limited role in influencing the leadership towards any kind of

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<sup>111</sup>W. R. Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism*, op.cit., p.90.

<sup>112</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 20-21.

<sup>113</sup>The British in 1944 had proposed to incorporate the Federated Malay States (FMS), Unfederated Malay States (UMS), Penang and Malacca into a Malayan Union. The plan was to create a unitary state comprising these states with a central government, governor, and legislative and executive councils. The Malay Sultans were to retain their position but sovereignty was to be transferred to the British Crown. All citizens of the new Malayan Union would have equal rights, including admission to the administrative civil service. Finally, Malayan citizenship was to be extended to all without discrimination as to race or creed. This had resulted in strong opposition from the Malays as they felt that they would totally lose their own land to aliens. The Malay mass opposition to the scheme was manifested by the founding of UMNO. When this plan was inaugurated in 1946, the opposition was so effective, that the plan was never brought into effect. Through negotiations between the British, UMNO and the Malay Sultans, the substitution of the new concept of a Federation of Malaya for the unpopular Malayan Union scheme was accomplished. In the Federation created in 1948, the sovereignty of the Sultans, the individuality of the states and Malay special privileges were upheld. See Andaya and Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 254-257.



Islamic aspirations.<sup>114</sup> It was observed that UMNO's commitment to Islam was of a limited nature which manifested most clearly in the overwhelming opposition to a proposal by the Kesatuan Melayu Singapura (KMS) that UMNO should strive for the establishment of an Islamic State.<sup>115</sup>

During this time, even though the spirit of Islamic reform had been replaced by Malay nationalism which had successfully mobilized public support, it in no way meant the demise of the former. The influence of Islamic reformism was apparently considerable in shaping Malay views, attitudes and approaches in the resolution of their plight. This could be seen, for instance, through the extent of the Islamic reformism influence upon several political figures such as Burhanuddin al-Helmy Mohd Nor, the leader of Partai Kebangsaan Melayu Malaya (PKMM), and Islamic leaders in UMNO itself, such as, Ahmad Fuad, Syed Amin Hadi, Syed Nasir Ismail, Abdullah Pa'him, Syed Jaafar Albar and Syed Sheikh al-Hady's son, Syed Alwi, who was appointed as UMNO's liason officer in the Department of Religious Affairs and Education. Some of UMNO's Islamic-oriented leaders, together with PKMM's leaders and those related to Ma'ahad al-Ihya' al-Sharif,<sup>116</sup> the Islamic college in Gunung Semanggol, Perak, founded the Islamic party of Hizbul Muslimin in 1948. Under the chairmanship of Sheikh Abu Bakar al-Baqir, the renowned reformist of the time and also the founder of the college, Hizbul Muslimin became the first Islamic party in the country whose major aims were, inter alia, to fight for Malayan independence, to build a Muslim society based on Islamic principles, and to form Malaya as an Islamic

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<sup>114</sup>The concern of the UMNO with religion could be seen in the articles of the party Constitution of 1960, stipulating that one of the UMNO's aims was "to promote the advancement of Islam and foster its growth as the *modus vivendi* for all Muslims living in the Federation of Malaya." See Safie Ibrahim, "The Islamic Elements in Malay Politics in Pre-Independent Malaya, 1937-1948," in *Islamic Culture*, vol. 52, 1978, p. 189.

<sup>115</sup>See N.J. Funston, *Malay Politics in Malaysia: UMNO and PAS* (Kuala Lumpur: Heinemann Asia, 1980), p. 92.

<sup>116</sup>On this institution and its significant role in sowing the Islamic reformism, see Nabir Abdullah, *Maahad Il Ihya' Assharif Gunung Semanggol 1934-1959* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia,) 1976.



State.<sup>117</sup>

While it is known that Hizbul Muslimin drew a great deal of its inspiration from the Indonesian reformist groups, i.e. the Muhammadiyah and Masjumi, it was to some extent modelled upon the Ikhwān Muslimūn of Egypt founded in 1928 by Ḥassan al-Bannā.<sup>118</sup> It is known that the Ikhwān Muslimūn began as an Islamic reform movement and became increasingly political in its activities revealing a strong element of anti-British xenophobia. The establishment of Hizbul Muslimin and its activities had stirred the British worry, and thus, its leaders were later arrested and the party disbanded before it was proscribed. Its spirit, however, was reborn in 1951 when the Pan-Malaya Islamic Party (PMIP), later known as PAS (Parti Islam Se-Tanah Melayu), came into being after some leaders of the Religious Bureau of UMNO revolted against the party's leadership on the grounds of the party's secular-nationalist leanings. However, prior to the country's independence, the spirit of Malay ethnic nationalism held a stronger grip on the society. It was this nationalism, together with opposition from the ruling establishment, namely, the Sultans, the traditionalist '*ulamā*', or the *Kaum Tua*, as well as the colonialists, that checked the growth of Islamic reformism in Malaya at the time.

### Islamic Reformism in Post-Independence Era

Though the influence of Islamic reformism was checked by many factors that lay in its path, its seeds continued to grow and played a vital role in the Malayan scene of Islam. Even though it had temporarily been stagnant during the phase of independence, Islamic reformism had a significant impact that could be obviously seen in the era after independence. Among the major impacts brought about by Islamic reformism in Malaya was that it had resultant consciousness among Malays. It had

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<sup>117</sup>See Chandrasekaran Pillay, "Protection of Malay Community: a Study of UMNO's Position and Opposition Attitude." Unpublished Masters dissertation submitted to the University of Science, Malaysia, 1974, pp. 186-192.

<sup>118</sup>Khoo Kay Kim, *Malay Society Transformation & Democratisation* (Petaling Jaya [Malaysia]: Pelanduk Publications, 1991), pp. 253-254.

introduced a new sort of Islamic thought that attempted to break up the wall of stereotyped Islamic conservatism. One may observe that the impact of Islamic reformism in the early stages was moderate, but in the long run, particularly in the post-independence period, the impact became greater. Islamic reformism was seen as having finally been successful in achieving some of its prescribed objectives. Above all, it had been gradually accepted by the Malay masses, including the so-called *Kaum Tua* themselves, penetrating the thick wall of religious orthodoxy, and creating a paradigm shift in the Malay Muslim community. Islamic reformism was eventually seen as a strong force which was able to cope with the new challenges of post-independence eras.

In the post-independence era Islamic reformism had met its new carriers. This era witnessed the re-emergence of Islamic reformism conveyed by various reform groups. This reform movement could be found everywhere in the Malay peninsula, from the state of Perlis in the north to the state of Johore in the south. Through formal organizations registered under the religious authority or informal ones, these groups intensively promote the ideas of reform to the Malay masses, just as their predecessors had done.<sup>119</sup> Organizations such as the Persatuan Al-Islah in Perlis, the Muhammadiyah in Penang, Ittiba' As-Sunnah in Negeri Sembilan and Ansar As-Sunnah in Melaka were mainly influenced by the former *Kaum Muda* movement that was inspired by the Egyptian reformists as well as the Wahhābī movement in Saudi Arabia. However, these groups were quite small, having membership and supporters of less than 5,000 respectively, and operated at the state level. They shared common ideas, but were seen as separate movements which thus were not able to increase their influence on the masses and to mobilize public support.

Nonetheless, among these groups, the Al-Islah reform movement in Perlis was seen as the most successful one since it had successfully influenced the authorities and the religious establishment of the state. The idea of Islamic reform was approved

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<sup>119</sup>On the reformist groups in Malaysia, see Mohd. Radzi Hj. Othman and O.K. Rahmat Dato' Baharuddin, *Gerekan Pembaharuan Islam Di Negeri Perlis dan Kaitannya di Negeri-negeri Lain di Dalam Malaysia* (Pulau Pinang: Universiti Sains Malaysia, 1991).

by the state government including the Ruler of Perlis himself.<sup>120</sup> Following such a triumph, this movement had developed into the recognized state organization dominating the whole Islamic activities in Perlis.<sup>121</sup> Generally, the other Malay states had approved the Shāfi'i *madhhab* as an official *madhhab*. The religious administration law of the states provides a clause stating that the Islamic law practiced in the states is based on the Shāfi'i *madhhab*.<sup>122</sup> However, this clause is not included in the Perlis law of religious administration, meaning that this state did not bind itself to any specific *fiqh madhhab*.<sup>123</sup> Instead of holding to the Shāfi'i *madhhab* or any other *madhhab*, they allowed a fresh *ijtihād*ic approach by stating that any religious practice as well as any state *fatwā* must be referred directly to the textual sources, i.e. the Qur'ān and Sunnah.<sup>124</sup> This method was similar to the former *Kaum Muda*'s idea which contended that Malay Muslims should refer any cases in Islamic law to the textual sources.

## Islamic Reformism: The Islamic Resurgence and The *Dakwah* Movement

Besides those locally operated reform groups which resembled the previous *Kaum Muda* reform movement, the rebirth of Islamic reformism in this period was also

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<sup>120</sup>On the development of reform movement in Perlis, see Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Gerakan Islah di Perlis Sejarah dan Pemikiran* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Pena, 1989).

<sup>121</sup>Detailed information regarding this movement can be explored in Mohd. Nasir Abd. Hamid, "Islamic Reform (Islah) with Special Reference to the Islah Movement in the State of Perlis, Malaysia," M.Phil thesis for CSIC, Faculty of Arts, the University of Birmingham, 1996.

<sup>122</sup>This is mentioned in the Law of Administration of Islamic Affairs in every state in Malaysia. See for example, *Administration of Muslim Law Enactment of Selangor*, No. 3, 1952.

<sup>123</sup>*Undang-undang Tubuh Kerajaan Perlis*, 1974 (Amended), 5 (1) states that the religion of the state is Islam of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*, with no mention of being bound to any *madhhab*. Sect. 7 (4) of the Perlis Law of Administration of Islamic Affairs, 1963, allocates that the *Majlis* (Council of Islamic Affairs) and the Committee of *Sharfah*, in giving a *fatwā* or opinion, must refer to the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet. None of the laws mention that the state follows any specific *fiqh madhhab*. In its *fatwā* dated 18 April 1988, the Perlis Council of Islamic Affairs, in defining the term *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* clearly states that it is not bound to any specific *fiqh madhhab*. See "Definasi *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*," in *Keputusan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Shar'iyyah Negeri Perlis*, 18 April 1988.

<sup>124</sup>See Sect. 7 (4) of the Perlis Law of Administration of Islamic Affairs, 1963.

reinforced by the phenomenon of Islamic resurgence in the early 1970s. The Islamic resurgence, which has been taking place almost everywhere in the Muslim world since the time, has been described as the most significant religious development in the Malay peninsula in the period after independence. Islamic resurgence, as Chandra Muzaffar suggests, is a description of the endeavour to re-establish Islamic values, Islamic practices, Islamic institutions, Islamic laws, indeed Islam in its entirety, in the lives of Muslims everywhere. It is an attempt to re-create an Islamic ethos, an Islamic social order, at the vortex of which is the Islamic human being, guided by the Qur'ān and the Sunnah.<sup>125</sup> In that sense, one might say that the notion of Islamic reformism which denotes the heightening of Islamic consciousness by returning to the fundamentals of Islam, namely the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, is in fact a key element in the Islamic resurgence phenomenon.

Islamic resurgence in Malaysia has been interpreted by several analysts in a number of ways. The main sociological studies assert that the major force underlying Islamic resurgence in Malaysia has been ethnic,<sup>126</sup> while some analysts assert the primacy of underlying class contradictions.<sup>127</sup> Other analysts offer a complementary sociological interpretation: the shifting of a large section of the Malay population from traditional village life and settlement in the burgeoning cities created an identity and cultural vacuum that an assertive Islam filled.<sup>128</sup> Other observers link it to the spiritual alienation felt by some Malays confronted both with accelerated urbanization and Westernization in social mores.<sup>129</sup> Some other writers interpret the Islamic resurgence phenomenon by placing it in the context of the modernizing of the Malaysian state.

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<sup>125</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1987), p. 2.

<sup>126</sup>See Judith Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam: Modern Religious Radicals and their Roots*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics*, *op.cit.*, pp. 53-55.

<sup>127</sup>See Clive S. Kessler, "Malaysia: Islamic Revivalism and Political Disaffection in a Divided Society," in *Southeast Asian Chronicle*, vol. 75, 1980, pp. 3-11.

<sup>128</sup>Shamsul Amri Baharuddin, "Religion and Ethnic Politics in Malaysia," in Charles F. Keyes, Laurel Kendall, and Helen Hardcores, eds., *Asian Visions of Authority: Religion and the Modern States of East and Southeast Asia* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994), pp. 99-116.

<sup>129</sup>See Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, *op.cit.*, pp.13-15.

For them, an ideology of defense of Malays engendered related religious manifestations.<sup>130</sup> Based on these viewpoints, it might be possible to postulate in general that the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia is a cultural response, or more precisely, the sum of various cultural responses, to the rapid social and economic change which characterizes Malaysia's contemporary development, in which the political dimension has become crucial to many Malay Muslims.<sup>131</sup>

In order to have a better picture of Islamic resurgence in Malaysia, a brief review of its development is worth noting. The resurgence of Islam as a factor to be reckoned with in Malaysian society, other than being precipitated by international or external sources, was primarily due to the dynamics of local domestic circumstances. For one thing, the origins of Islamic resurgence can be traced directly to government policies after the 1969 ethnic riots<sup>132</sup> which aimed to redress the socio-economic imbalance of ethnic communities, or, in other words, to improve the Malays' economic plight. The government's attempts to redress the conditions that led to Malay-Chinese rioting had, in fact, witnessed a reassertion of Malay Muslim identity, the growth of Islamic activism, and the expansion of Islamic institutions in public life.

The government's pro-*bumiputra*<sup>133</sup> policies such as the New Economic Policy (NEP) and New Education Policy (NEDP) launched shortly after the riots led to a

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<sup>130</sup>See for example, Raymond Lee, "The State, Religious Nationalism, and Ethnic Rationalization in Malaysia," in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 13: 4, October 1990, pp. 482-502.

<sup>131</sup>See Jomo Kwame Sundram and Ahmed Shabery Cheek, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence," in *Third World Quarterly*, vol 10, no. 2, (1988), pp. 843-844.

<sup>132</sup>These were racial riots between the two largest ethnic communities, the Malays and the Chinese, started on 13 May 1969. This riots was described by Tunku Abdul Rahman, the Prime Minister at that time, as the darkest period in Malaysian history (see Leon Comber, *13 May 1969*, Hong Kong: Henemann Asia, 1983, p. 82). Official figures gave the toll of the rioting which followed (from 13 May to 31 July 1969) as 196 dead, most of them Chinese, and 1,109 injured. More than 10,000 were arrested and thousands lost their homes. However, it was observed that the figure of death toll could have been four times as high (see John Slimming, *Malaysia: Death of Democracy*, London: John Murray Press, 1969, pp. 47-48). For more detailed information on this ethnic riot, see for example, Tunku Abdul Rahman, *May 13: Before and After* (Kuala Lumpur: Utusan Melayu Press, 1969); F.V. Gagliano, "Communal Violence in Malaysia, 1969: The Political Aftermath," in *Papers in International Studies*, Southeast Asia Series, no. 13, 1970.

<sup>133</sup>*Bumiputra*, a Malay word which literally means 'prince of the soil' or indigenous, used mainly to refer to the Malays as well as other local indigenous people of Malaysia including those in Sabah and Sarawak.

considerable number of Malay youths and students being accorded opportunities to further their education up to tertiary level, in both national and overseas institutions of higher learning. Most of them were sent abroad to study in the science disciplines.<sup>134</sup> Shifting from their rural settings in the village, to one completely different and alien, namely overseas universities in the West, these youths felt a sense of alienation and 'anomie'.<sup>135</sup> Over-awed and ill-equipped to face the cultural shock of Western society, with its attendant liberal values and norms, these Malay youths tended to develop a sense of disillusionment, and at times, revulsion against things associated with Western values and lifestyle. The conflict of this change of environment, and new and difficult educational standards resulted in a return to Islam. For them, studying overseas had brought about a strengthening and better articulation of Islamic sentiments in them.<sup>136</sup>

This Islamic orientation developed mainly among the Malay students because of their exposure to the influence of global Islamic revivalism disseminated by foreign Muslim student activists, especially from the Middle East and Indian subcontinent. This influence was spread through various Islamic activities and a wide range of Islamic literature. Among the Islamic literature that highly attracted them were those which were associated with Islamic reform. This included the ideas and works by the leaders of Ikhwān Muslimūn and the Jama'at Islami, namely Ḥasan al-Bannā, Saiyid Quṭb, Sa'īd Ḥawwā of the former; Abul A'la Mawdudi and Abu Hasan Ali al-Nadwi of the latter. These leaders were regarded by them as their spiritual fathers, and their works, such as the works of Saiyid Quṭb, *Ma'ālim fī al-Ṭarīq* and *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, for

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<sup>134</sup>According to the government's statistics, by 1975, there were 31,500 Malaysian students (both private and government-sponsored) in Western Universities. See *Third Malaysia Plan*, 1976, p. 406. This was more than twice the combined total enrolment of all the universities in Malaysia, although the non-Malay proportions overseas was also high.

<sup>135</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., pp. 62-63; idem, "Islamisation in Malaysia: Between Ideals and Realities", in Hussin Mutalib and Taj ul-Islam Hashimi eds., *Islam, Muslims and the Modern State* (New York: St. Martin Press, 1994), p. 154.

<sup>136</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., pp. 62-63.



example, had an electrifying effect on their minds.<sup>137</sup> Furthermore, the inspirational work undertaken by the Islamic Centre in Geneva had assisted them to expand their understanding of Islam through the distribution of booklets and brochures, and the publication of its periodical, *Al-Muslimoon*.<sup>138</sup>

There were various student associations which actively organized a variety of Islamic activities and programmes for their members. In the United Kingdom and Eire, the most renowned Muslim students association which was essentially responsible for instilling a sense of Islamic consciousness was the Federation of the Students' Islamic Societies (FOSIS). In the United States and Canada, Islamic activities for Muslim students were carried out by the Muslim Students Association (MSA) of America, whilst in Australia, the same activities were organized by the Australian Federation of Muslim Students Association (AFMSA).<sup>139</sup> Besides such associations which were open to all Muslim students, there were also many associations formed by the Malaysian students exclusively for Malay Muslim students. These included associations such as Islamic Representative Council (IRC) and Malaysian Islamic Study Group (MISG).<sup>140</sup> Through various Islamic activities undertaken by these organizations, such as an Annual Conference, a Winter Gathering, Islamic Training Camps, seminars and weekly discussion in small groups (*usrah*), the students were able to enhance their spiritual understanding of Islam. At the Annual Conference or Winter Gathering, the Malay students also had the opportunities to meet Muslim scholars and personalities from the Middle East or Pakistan, who gave talks about various facets of Islam.<sup>141</sup>

It was from all these exposures and experiences that the desire came to re-

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<sup>137</sup>Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia," in *Asian Survey*, vol. xxi, no. 10, October 1981, p. 1043.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid, p. 1042. See also, idem, *Penghayatan Sebuah Ideal: Suatu Tafsiran Tentang Islam Semasa* (Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1987), pp. 144-145.

<sup>139</sup>Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia," op.cit., p. 1042-1043. Zainah Anwar, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia: Dakwah Among Students* (Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publication, 1987), pp. 26-27.

<sup>140</sup>Mohamad Abu Bakar, *Penghayatan Sebuah Ideal*, op.cit., p. 145.

<sup>141</sup>Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism," op.cit., p. 1043; Hussin Mutalib, *Islamic Revivalism*, op.cit., p. 29.

establish an Islamic society in its complete form: through values, laws, institutions, and the behaviour of Muslims. With consciousness that this desire would not be achieved unless every single Muslim commits himself to the Faith, the Malay students devoted a good deal of their time to inculcating a full understanding of Islam among their fellow Malay students. This endeavour of inviting their counterparts to understand and practise Islam better was described as part of *dakwah* (Ar. *da'wah* means missionary work) activities, whose explanation will follow in due course. Returning to Malaysia upon graduation, and holding various leadership positions in government ministries, these Islamic-oriented graduates joined the local Islamic organizations like Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM or Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia) to participate in *dakwah* activities and disseminate Islam to the Malay masses.

Within the Malaysian context, the *dakwah* activities among the students of local universities developed in a similar scenario. It was observed that in the wake of the 1969 riots, the government found that it was necessary to impose stringent curbs on political activities and freedom. However, the clamp down on student activism on the campuses and the promulgation of the revised Sedition Act of 1970 boosted Islamic activities instead of dampening them.<sup>142</sup> The irony is that religion or religious issues were, in general, not regarded as 'sensitive,' thereby enabling Muslim students to resort to Islam as a strong vehicle for expressing Malay-Muslim grievances and ideas. At least within the campuses, Islam was the only tool for dissatisfied Malay youth to resort to.<sup>143</sup> On the campuses, these students were actively involved in *dakwah* activities through their participation in various student societies, such as the Persatuan Kebangsaan Pelajar-pelajar Islam Malaysia (PKPIM or Malaysian National Association of Muslim Students) and Persatuan Mahasiswa Islam (PMI or Muslim Students Union). In the University of Malaya, Persatuan Bahasa Melayu Universiti Malaya (PBMUM or Malay Language Society of University of Malaya) led by the most notable student leader at the time, Anwar Ibrahim, was a major catalyst of *dakwah*

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<sup>142</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., p. 60.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid.

activities among Muslim students on the campus. The *dakwah* activism among the students within the campuses had consequently developed into a national Islamic movement by the formation of an organization operating at national level, namely, Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM or Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia) in 1971. Founded by several alumni of PKPIM, ABIM has been acting as a platform for the graduating students from the respective universities and colleges who had been active in *dakwah* activities on the campuses to continue their Islamic activities among Muslim masses.

The 1969 riots and the subsequent launching of policies aimed at restructuring the socio-economic imbalance of ethnic communities have also accelerated the urbanization of the Malay community. About 30 percent of Malays, who, by historical accounts, have always been a rural people, had moved towards the inner cities by 1979 to achieve their economic aspirations.<sup>144</sup> This migration had inevitably affected the lifestyle and ethos of the Malay population in general. The challenges posed by the metropolis setting in urban centres had led to a spiritual emptiness, and as a consequence, a tendency for the new urban Malays to return to Islam for solace and comfort.<sup>145</sup> Many joined various Muslim organizations and participated in Islamic activities. Besides the university student activism, it was this very circumstance that kept the *dakwah* activities alive in the urban centres.

As the *dakwah* activities rapidly developed and gained acceptance by the masses, it became a mainstream that greatly characterized the Malaysian scene of Islam at that time. The emergence of numerous *dakwah* organizations as well as a number of new government policies which gave greater emphasis to Islam were observed as the most significant manifestations of the rise of Muslim consciousness, or in other words, the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia. Given its significance, much has been written on this subject by both Western and local scholars. It should be noted that although *dakwah* is loosely translated as missionary activities, in the Malaysian

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<sup>144</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islamic Revivalism*, op.cit., p. 29.

<sup>145</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., pp. 15-16.

context this term refers to the task of making Muslims better Muslims rather than converting non-believers.<sup>146</sup> Hence, *dakwah* is the propagation of the Islamic message and a call on Muslims to upgrade their Islamicity. The *dakwah* movement manifests itself in the activities of various Muslim organizations throughout the country. There are at least five eminent *dakwah* organizations which have been the important contributors to Islamic resurgence in Malaysia, namely Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS), Darul Arqam, Jamaat Tabligh and Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM). The following sections shall briefly review these groups and their role in generating the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia.

### Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM)

ABIM was launched in 1969 and was officially approved as a registered organization by the Malaysian government in 1971. ABIM was formed to defend and propagate the message of Islam especially its comprehensive, universal and humanistic content, and its feasibility in resolving issues of nation-building.<sup>147</sup> Its role primarily was to generate an Islamic movement as the path to Islamic revival in Malaysia.<sup>148</sup> Holding to its motto to strive towards building a society which is based on the principles of Islam and, in particular, presenting Islam as a way of life,<sup>149</sup> ABIM has been most vociferous in propagating the ideals of Islam, and its activities have greatly contributed to the nationwide Islamic awakening among the younger generation Malays. The combination of ABIM leaders which include those with secular and religious education from the local universities and abroad, had enabled ABIM to influence a wide cross-section of

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<sup>146</sup>N. John Funston, "The Politics of Islamic Reassertion: Malaysia," in Mohd. Taib Osman, ed., *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985), p. 171.

<sup>147</sup>Husin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., p. 75. Detail information on ABIM's history, its principles and objectives can also be explored in its official internet website at <http://www.abim.org.my/>.

<sup>148</sup>See *The Path to Islamic Revival in Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: The Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1976), p. 1.

<sup>149</sup>Siddiq Fadil, *Mengangkat Martabat Umat Koleksi Ucapan Dasar Muktamar Sanawi ABIM* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Pustaka Salam, 1989), pp. 4 and passim.

people. ABIM's appeal was further enhanced from 1974 to 1982 when it was led by the charismatic leader, Anwar Ibrahim.

ABIM's version of Islam has claimed ideological and even organisational affinity with the established Islamic reform movements and their leaders abroad, especially the Ikhwān Muslimūn and Jama'at Islami, both of which have emphasized the establishment of an Islamic state.<sup>150</sup> ABIM's stature as a highly organized and motivated Muslim organization was well accepted in Malaysia. Its declaration to uphold and strive for the realization of Islamic objectives, as well as to champion the cause of Islamic justice for everyone, gained considerable attention on the part of both the Malaysian government and the public as the movement's reputation began to spread at home and to Islamic organizations abroad.<sup>151</sup> However, ABIM's eminence began to decline when Anwar departed to UMNO in 1982. His resignation from the organization created some confusion and depression within ABIM, and thus, caused some of its outstanding leaders, such as Fadzil Nor and Abdul Hadi Awang to join PAS. ABIM thereafter was seen as having lost most of its momentum and settling in to a more docile existence, espousing a moderate and more innerworldly religious viewpoint conveniently compatible with that of UMNO's own public religious posture.<sup>152</sup> Though the movement lost its momentum, it still plays an important role in the growth of Islamic resurgence in Malaysia until the present day.

### Parti Islam Semalaysia (PAS)

PAS is the oldest and best-known Islamic political party in the country. It is known as the continuation of the Islamic reformist party Hizbul Muslimin which was established

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<sup>150</sup>Jomo & Ahmed Shabery, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence," op.cit., p. 846.

<sup>151</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., pp. 61-62.

<sup>152</sup>See Judith Nagata, "How to be Islamic without being an Islamic State," in Akbar s. Ahmed & Hastings Donnan (eds.), *Islam, Globalization and Postmodernity* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 70.



in 1948 and was later proscribed by the British.<sup>153</sup> PAS was established in 1951 by several former members of UMNO's religious bureau who left UMNO in order to form their own party after a dispute over the type of state to be established following independence from the British. For PAS, the new state was to be Islamic in nature and not secular as envisaged by UMNO. According to PAS, religion could not be confined solely to a bureau in a political party, but should instead encompass all aspects of life including politics.<sup>154</sup> From the very outset, PAS's goal has been the establishment of an Islamic state based upon the Qur'ān and Sunnah. It is committed to an untainted, untarnished Islam and opposes secularism, capitalism and all Western ideologies.<sup>155</sup> It drew a great deal of its inspiration from the Ikhwān Muslimūn and the Jama'at Islami, and has a direct connection with their leaders.<sup>156</sup>

In the early stages, PAS had its strong influence among the Malay peasant society, particularly in the states of Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah. Despite its limited influence, PAS had been able to form the state government in Kelantan and Terengganu for several times since the first general election of 1959.<sup>157</sup> The participation of several ex-ABIM leaders in the party in 1982 afforded PAS a new line of leadership which is known as the 'ulamā' leadership.<sup>158</sup> Under its new leadership PAS has had a stronger influence as it is increasingly accepted by Malay Muslims of all

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<sup>153</sup>See Y. Mansoor Marican, "Malay Nationalism and the Islamic Party of Malaysia," in *Islamic Studies*, vol 16, 1977, pp. 295-297; Mustafa Ali, "The Islamic Movement and the Malaysian Experience," in Azzam Tamimi (ed.), *Power Sharing Islam?* (London: Liberty for Muslim World Publications, 1993), pp. 111-112. Information on PAS' history, ideology and objectives can also be obtained at its official internet homepage: <http://www.parti-pas.org>.

<sup>154</sup>Safie Ibrahim, *The Islamic Party of Malaysia Its Formative Stages and Ideology* (Kelantan[Malaysia]: Nuawi Ismail, 1981), pp. 50-51.

<sup>155</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>156</sup>PAS has been always, from time to time, inviting the leaders of Ikhwān Muslimūn, such as Sayf al-Islām b. Hasan al-Bannā, Fathī Yakan etc. for consultation and giving talk on various issues to its members. On Ikhwān's influence in PAS, see Sapian Daud, "Ikhwan Muslimin: Pengaruhnya dalam Pergerakan Islam di Malaysia, Tinjauan Khusus kepada ABIM dan PAS," unpublished B.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1990.

<sup>157</sup>At the time this thesis is being written, Kelantan and Terengganu are under the PAS government.

<sup>158</sup>On the 'ulamā' leadership in PAS, see for example, Hasmat Ali, "Pimpinan Ulama Dalam Pas: Satu Penilaian," unpublished B.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1987; Muhyiddin Aziz, "Kepimpinan Ulama Dalam PAS: Satu Analisis," unpublished B.A. thesis, University of Malaya, 1996.



social strata.<sup>159</sup> As a political party, PAS has largely been responsible for generating Islamic political consciousness in the Malay Muslim society. Hence, the significance of PAS in Malaysian resurgent Islam lies mainly on its vital role in the political arena, since it sees that obtaining political power is crucial for the establishment of an Islamic state.

## Darul Arqam

Darul Arqam<sup>160</sup> was established in 1969 by a religious teacher, Ashaari Muhammad and his disciples, with the aim of putting into practice the teachings of Islam.<sup>161</sup> Its centre of activities was at Sungai Penchala near Kuala Lumpur whilst its branches could be found throughout the country. Though a structured organization like any other, Darul Arqam was unique in that it was an actual community at the same time. It was indeed a traditional commune with its own land, houses, mosque, schools, clinics, shops and factories. In the commune, the rules which have become the hallmark of Darul Arqam were strictly obeyed, in dress,<sup>162</sup> manners of greeting, and the segregation of sexes.<sup>163</sup> At the beginning, Darul Arqam was mainly concerned with cultivating personality, emphasizing on becoming good Muslims in the ritualistic sense. This group succeeded in attracting numerous followers, given their novel approach to Islam in the Malaysian context, maintaining that the struggle to establish an Islamic state must be preceded

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<sup>159</sup>Mustafa Ali, "The Islamic Movement," op.cit., p. 120.

<sup>160</sup>Darul Arqam (*dār al-Arqam* or the house of al-Arqam) is named after a Companion of Prophet Muhammad, al-Arqam b. Abī al-Arqam, who gave away his house to be used as a center of Islamic missionary activities in the early days of the prophethood of Muhammad. See Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia Sejarah dan Pemikiran Jamaat Tabligh & Darul Arqam* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Kintan, 1992), p. 71.

<sup>161</sup>See Ashaari Muhammad, *Matlamat Perjuangan Menurut Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerangan al-Arqam, 1985), p. 69.

<sup>162</sup>Formal dress which had also been the Arqam's identity was traditional green *jubbah* (robe) and turban for men, whilst their women wore black *jilbab* (gown) and veil.

<sup>163</sup>For more account on Darul Arqam, see for example, Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 91-119; idem, *Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 68-130; Judith Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam*, op.cit., pp. 104-116.

by creating an Islamic society such as that pioneered by Darul Arqam settlement in Sungai Penchala. Darul Arqam was very conservative in its outlook, but its approach, popularly viewed as anti-establishment, succeeded in attracting many of the young and educated.

Darul Arqam was basically less involved in politics, though it used to criticize most Islamic movements, both local and abroad, including the Jama'at Islami and Ikhwān Muslimūn, viewing them as only theorising and shouting slogans rather than putting the struggle to establish an Islamic state into practice.<sup>164</sup> Darul Arqam was better known by its active involvement in numerous economic programmes, from producing *halal* foodstuffs and toiletries to organizing various commercial enterprises. The main goal of the establishment of these economic ventures was to inculcate among the Malay Muslims a spirit of economic independence from non-Muslim control, despite the apparent difficulty in a situation like Malaysia.<sup>165</sup> It believed that in an evolving Islamic community, an autonomous economic base was crucial. Since Darul Arqam had a commitment of sorts towards strengthening the economic position of the Malays via traditional Islam, it had not given itself an explicit political role in order to achieve this aim. Its leadership was convinced that by confining itself to grassroots economic and social activities, it would eventually be able to create an Islamic social order.<sup>166</sup> Despite its excellence in economic programmes, Darul Arqam was involved in several theological controversies which led to its downfall.<sup>167</sup> According to the

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<sup>164</sup>See Ashaari Muhammad, *Inilah Pandanganku* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerangan al-Arqam, 1989), pp. 69-85; Jomo & Ahmed Shabery, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence," op.cit., p. 847; Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia*, op.cit., p. 117.

<sup>165</sup>See Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 107-114; *Dewan Masyarakat*, December 1976, pp. 7-10.

<sup>166</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>167</sup>Among the main theological controversies involving Darul Arqam were the doctrine of Imam al-Mahdi and some issues in their adoption of the Muhammadiyah ṣūfī order, such as the doctrinal principle of Aurad Muhammadiyah. With regard to Aurad Muhammadiyah, Ashaari claims in his book, *Aurad Muhammadiyah Pegangan Darul Arqam* that the founder of Muhammadiyah order, Sheikh Muhammad Suhaimi b. Abdullah, known as Syeikh Suhaimi (died in Klang, Selangor in 1925), had been given the *awrad* (sing. *wird* means specified *dhikrs* recited at certain times at day and night in specific manners) by the Prophet Muḥammad in a meeting within the Ka'bah. He claimed that Syeikh Suhaimi has met the Prophet and spoke to him in person within the Ka'bah with complete consciousness and not in a dream. He also claims that Syeikh Suhaimi did not physically die in 1925, but has been transcendentally vanished, and will return some day

National Fatwa Council, this group had adopted some theological heresies and spread deviationist teachings which were a threat to public order.<sup>168</sup> It therefore recommended the banning of Darul Arqam. Consequently, the government had officially banned this group in August 1994. Though it has now diminished, Darul Arqam is still remembered for its significant role in Malaysia's resurgent Islam for about 25 years.

## Jamaat Tabligh

Jamaat Tabligh is a missionary movement which originated from Delhi, India and has since spread throughout the world. This group has been in Malaysia since the early 1950s as a result of efforts by Indian missionaries, and this movement has become more active since the 1970s under the impact of Islamic resurgence.<sup>169</sup> Initially, its adherents consisted of Malaysians of Indian descent, but afterwards, with the growth of the Islamic resurgence, it succeeded in penetrating the Malay community, both in the urban and rural areas.<sup>170</sup> Established with the aim of undertaking the *dakwah* mission by calling people to the path of God,<sup>171</sup> this group seems to be informal, loosely structured without any clear nucleus and does not operate as an organization.

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in the future to earth as Imam al-Mahdi. See Ashaari Muhammad, *Aurad Muhammadiyah Pegangan Darul Arqam* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerangan al-Arqam, 1986), pp. 163-177. This book had been banned by the government authority immediately after being published. Following the doctrinal heresies in Darul Arqam, all Ashaari's disciples who together with him founded this group had one by one left Darul Arqam showing their disapproval to Ashaari's heresies. See Mohd Roshdi Yusoff, *Darul Arqam Antara Kebenaran dan Kekeliruan* (Penang: Al-Ikhwan, 1990).

<sup>168</sup>See the *fatwa* given by National Council for Islamic Affairs in August 1994, as published in *Utusan Malaysia*, 6 August 1994. Following the ban, its leaders including Ashaari Muhammad were detained under the terms of the Internal Security Act (ISA). Not long after their release from detention, there were some efforts made by Darul Arqam's former members to revive the group under new organization such as the Rufaqa' group. These attempts were however broken-up by the government authorities. In recent development, Ashaari himself was exiled from his residence in Rawang, Selangor to Labuan Island in Sabah for his attempt to revive his group. See *Berita Harian*, 12 March 2002.

<sup>169</sup>Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 2-3.

<sup>170</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-6; Jomo & Ahmed Shabery, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence," op.cit., p. 846.

<sup>171</sup>Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia*, op.cit., p. 18.

It is a much less open organization, places heavy emphasis on rituals, and requires all its followers to go round the country to undertake missionary activities at least a few days each month. Some of them even go overseas, such as to India and Indonesia for that purpose.<sup>172</sup>

The Tabligh's missionary activities consist mainly of organizing informal religious talks in mosques and at the homes of friends and acquaintances. Its concern seems to be confined to the aspect of individual religious life. It emphasizes self-reform such as observing various religious rituals, being pious, kind and considerate, and developing one's personal integrity.<sup>173</sup> Its political ambitions, therefore, relate essentially to a desire to "convert" politicians, which is considered sufficient to ensure that they will not thereafter act unjustly.<sup>174</sup> The simple and inoffensive approach of the Tabligh movement has attracted many Malay Muslims of all strata, from the village youth to the professionals and highly educated individuals. Because of its apolitical stance, Tabligh is rarely viewed with suspicion. Some people however feel uneasy about the apolitical Indian orientation of the movement, and undiplomatic manner in which some of its members have tried to propagate Islam.<sup>175</sup> The government stance towards this movement is ambivalent. Some state governments, such as Melaka, imposed a ban on this movement on the grounds that it caused negative effects to the society.<sup>176</sup> The federal government, however, gave permission to this group to conduct their activities as long as it is not involved in religious heresy and devianist

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<sup>172</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., p. 44.

<sup>173</sup>Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Gerakan Islam Tradisional di Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 17-24; Chandra, *Islamic Resurgence*, p. 44.

<sup>174</sup>N.J. Funston, "The Politics of Islamic Reassertion," op.cit., p. 174.

<sup>175</sup>Jomo & Ahmed Shabery, "The Politics of Malaysia's Islamic Resurgence," op.cit. p. 846; Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism," op.cit., p. 1041.

<sup>176</sup>The Fatwa Committee of Melaka officially banned the Tabligh group and its activities in the state in March 1992. This *fatwā* was based on the reason that the Tabligh followers subscribed to a kind of Sūfism that totally neglect worldly materialism. The followers of Tabligh, according to the *fatwā*, were only interested in attending gatherings in mosques and suraus to the point of neglecting their jobs and families. Many Tabligh followers even left their wives and children behind for 40 days to attend the Tabligh activities. See *New Straits Times*, 12 March 1992.

teachings.<sup>177</sup> The Tabligh's apolitical stance is really seen as favouring the status quo, thus benefiting the government.

### Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM)

Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM), a reform-oriented organization, was officially established in 1991 by former members of the oldest Malay Muslim students group in the United Kingdom, i.e. Islamic Representative Council (IRC), who joined PAS and ABIM after returning to Malaysia and held some important positions in these organizations. Following disagreements over certain issues around 1988, they quitted and formed their own group. Aptly named, this group aims at reforming (*islāh*) the society in order to enable Islam to be fully practised among them.<sup>178</sup> JIM is strongly influenced by the Ikhwān Muslimūn and closely resembles that organization and so is sometimes considered as an Ikhwān branch in Malaysia.<sup>179</sup> Like ABIM and PAS, JIM also has a close connection with the Ikhwān's leaders. Though JIM emphasizes all aspects of life in its reform programmes, its most outstanding success may be seen in its education programme. JIM's school education programme implemented in its nationwide prominent Islamic school 'Al-Amin,' has been regarded as the most advanced Islamic education system in Malaysia.<sup>180</sup> Holding to its philosophy to lead and popularize *dakwah* and changes in society,<sup>181</sup> JIM has succeeded in attracting the Malay Muslim masses of all segments especially the youth and university students.

From these five major *dakwah* organizations, it is significant to note that only

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<sup>177</sup>See *Berita Harian*, 21 march 1992.

<sup>178</sup>Saari Sungib, *Membina Teras-terras Kekuatan* (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 1996), p. 5.

<sup>179</sup>Anna Sofie Roald, *Tarbia: Education and Politics in Islamic Movements in Jordan and Malaysia* (Malmoe: Tryck Graphic System, 1994), p. 280.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid.

<sup>181</sup>Saari Sungib, *Bersama Menggaris Agenda Ummah* (Kuala Lumpur: Pertubuhan Jamaah Islah Malaysia, 1995), p. 30.

three of them, namely ABIM, PAS and JIM, consistently appear as the agents of Islamic reformism in this era of Islamic resurgence. They mostly adopt the reform ideas taught by al-Bannā and Mawdudi and learn the methods of Ikhwān Muslimūn and Jama'at Islami in disseminating their *dakwah* mission to the masses. In addition, ABIM, PAS and JIM also have personal contact with several leaders of the Ikhwān, whom they frequently consult with. Though Darul Arqam and Jamaat Tabligh were also responsible in generating Islamic resurgence in Malaysia, their appearance was rather perceived, as stated by some observers, as the resurgence of neo-traditionalism, in the case of Darul Arqam, and reformative traditionalism, i.e, in the case of Jamaat Tabligh.<sup>182</sup> This is because both Darul Arqam and Jamaat Tabligh were apparently seen as neither espousing the ideas and methods of Islamic reformism as brought by al-Afghanī and 'Abduh nor having any link with the foreign Islamic reform movements such as the Ikhwān and Jama'at Islami. Both Darul Arqam and Tabligh have their own way of spreading the message of Islam to the Malay masses, i.e. by adopting traditionalism in progressive and reformative ways. They are traditional, which in this context specifically means that they have an uncritical attachment to ideas, values and life-styles from the past.<sup>183</sup> However, all these five major organizations, ABIM, PAS, Darul Arqam, Tabligh and JIM share the same objective, namely the resurrection of classical Islam. Towards that end, all seek to persuade Malaysians to adopt the Islamic perspective. Thus, although they adopt different approaches to the attainment of their goal, they are all revivalists who may be subsumed, according to some writers, under the category of "fundamentalist" in view of their Islamic orientation and rejection of Western materialism and secularism.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup>See Abdul Rahman Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam Di Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 77-119.

<sup>183</sup>See Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., p. 46.

<sup>184</sup>See for example, Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism," op.cit., p. 1046.



## The UMNO and the Government's Policy of Islamization

The resurgence of the holistic Islamic consciousness spearheaded by the *dakwah* movement since the 1970s with its call for Islamic alternatives continues to exert its influence on the Malay community as well as the state authorities. The strong demand for the establishment of more Islamic institutions in the country and the greater Islamic identity of the Malay community from the *dakwah* movement has created a pressure on the UMNO-led government to adopt policies and strategies which are supportive of Islam.<sup>185</sup> Under the leadership of Dr. Mahathir Mohamed who began his prime ministership in 1981, the government decidedly took on a more conciliatory stance and adopted a positive approach towards the demands of the *dakwah* movement. Anwar Ibrahim's entry into UMNO and the government encouraged Mahathir even further in launching numerous policies of ever-increasing boldness in support of Islam.<sup>186</sup> This government's supportive attitude is manifested mainly through various Islamic programmes under its Islamization policy. The government's Islamization policy can be described as building up the centrality of Islam and the government's legitimacy as its patron, by accommodating to selected aspects of the demands of the *dakwah* movement. Islamization itself, in a sense, is a process of legitimate restoration of the central place of Islam as a comprehensive way of life of the Muslim populace, as well as a process of desecularization of Malaysian culture, government, law, economy and education in the post-independence era.<sup>187</sup>

In realizing the Islamization policy, a wide range of Islamic programmes have been implemented in various aspects which could be seen throughout the 1980s and 1990s. These include, for example, the establishment of Islamic Banks, International Islamic University and International Institute of Islamic Thought, the

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<sup>185</sup>Noraini Othman, "The Sociopolitical Dimensions of Islamization in Malaysia: A Cultural Accommodation of Social Change?" in Noraini Othman (ed.), *Shari'a Law and the Modern Nation State* (Kuala Lumpur: SIS Forum (Malaysia) Berhad, 1994, pp. 133-134.

<sup>186</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., pp. 139-140.

<sup>187</sup>M. Kamal Hassan, *Towards Actualizing Islamic Ethical and Educational Principles in Malaysian Society* (Petaling Jaya: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia, 1996), p. 108.

institutionalization of concrete Islamic programmes within the government, inculcation of Islamic values in government administration, encouragement of Islamic intellectual discourse in government departments and institutions of higher learning, reform of national education by incorporating Islamic perspectives and moral values, initiation of changes in the legal system to facilitate the growth and expansion of Islamic *shar'ah* court administration, removal of un-Islamic practices in official ceremonies of government departments, infusion of Islamic values in government major policies such as in the National Development Policy and Vision 2020, eradication of the practice of charging interest in government loans for Muslims, establishment of an Islamic insurance company, establishment of Institute of Islamic Understanding and creation of interest-free banking facilities in conventional commercial banks.<sup>188</sup> At the international level, the Malaysian government has strengthened its constant pro-Muslim policy which can be seen, for instance, through its pro-Palestinian and anti-Israel policy, pro-Mujahideen during the Russian invasion in Afghanistan, pro-Bosnian Muslims during the Serbian attacks, its active role in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), and consistent criticisms of the Super Powers.<sup>189</sup>

The underlying reasons behind the government's Islamization policy are various. The first may have been the pressures coming from the collective force of the *dakwah* movement, and the desire to outwit PAS and check the latter's Islamic appeal among Malays.<sup>190</sup> From the government's perspective, the Islamic resurgence is potentially destabilizing for it has very tangible political consequences. UMNO found itself increasingly in competition with PAS. In order to reduce the electoral appeal of its opponents, the UMNO-led government felt obliged to take the initiative in an

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<sup>188</sup>The list of major Islamization programmes under Mahathir's administration can be found, for example, in Hussin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., pp. 133-139.

<sup>189</sup>See Hussin Mutalib, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 32-33; M. Kamal Hassan, *Towards Actualizing Islamic Ethical*, op.cit., pp. 105-106.

<sup>190</sup>Husin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity*, op.cit., pp. 35 and *passim*; idem, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 31-32 and *passim*; Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism", op.cit., pp. 1058; Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., pp. 80-82; Judith Nagata, "How to be Islamic without being an Islamic State," op.cit., p. 86.

Islamization process.<sup>191</sup> The former Prime Minister, Tun Hussein Onn had openly admitted that UMNO's Islamization drives were mainly precipitated by the political threat that PAS posed to the government.<sup>192</sup> Some observers allege that as the government's Islamization policy is seen as not based on genuine Islamic consciousness, it will thus, not bring about any genuine transformation that will herald a more just Islamic social order. On the contrary, it will merely reinforce the existing social structure with all its flaws.<sup>193</sup> This is part of the reason why PAS and ABIM reject the concept of Islamization pursued by the government. ABIM sees it as a form of patchwork within a system alien to Islam, whilst PAS views it as cosmetic Islamization, as a sort of label stuck onto a system that has nothing to do with Islam.<sup>194</sup>

In spite of these claims, the government's Islamization programme appears to be genuine since Mahathir himself sometimes seems to be a veritable Islamist.<sup>195</sup> Mahathir has also admitted that he himself is an Islamic fundamentalist as he subscribes to the fundamental principles of faith.<sup>196</sup> Moreover, the significant role of Anwar Ibrahim as the architect of the Mahathir-led government Islamization programme proves that the government is serious to support the Islamic cause, and the policy is not a mere political gimmick. Anwar himself, the former ABIM president and a prominent Malaysian Islamist figure who is known by his strong Islamic

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<sup>191</sup>David Camroux, "State Responses To Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia," in *Asian Survey*, vol xxxvi, no. 9, September 1996, pp. 856-857.

<sup>192</sup>In Hussein Onn's words: "You may wonder why we spend so much money on Islam.... if we don't, PAS will get us. The party will and does claim, that we are not religious, and the people will lose faith." See *Berita Harian*, 21 October 1979.

<sup>193</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., p. 82.

<sup>194</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>195</sup>This might be seen through his various statements and writings on Islam. See for example, Mahathir Mohamad, *Islam and the Muslim Ummah*, ed. by Hashim Makaruddin (Subang Jaya [Malaysia]: Pelanduk Publication, 2000); Mahathir Mohamad, "Religion and Society," in Syed Othman Alhabshi & Syed Omar Syed Agil (eds.), *The Role and Influence of Religion in Society* (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Islamic Understanding of Malaysia, 1994), pp. 3-39.

<sup>196</sup>Mahathir made this admission in an Annual Lecture series organised by Institute of Southeast Asian Studies in Singapore in 1988, as cited in the *Strait Times*, 15 and 16 December 1988. As far as his Islamic thought and orientation is concerned, which is supportive of modern Islamic thought and critical on Islamic traditionalism, Mahathir might be also regarded as an Islamic modernist or reformist.

background, image and commitment, believed that Mahathir is supportive of Islam, and this had been his major reason for joining UMNO and the government.<sup>197</sup> Though he admitted that there was no guarantee that the Islamization policy would eventually make Malaysia an Islamic state, Anwar believed that the policy would do good for the country, and it would enrich the overall quality of life of Malaysian society. The Islamic state, in his point of view, will be a natural outcome if Islamic values and policies could gradually seep into people's lives.<sup>198</sup>

To make the Islamization process successful, Anwar, during his ministership in the government had appointed several ABIM figures to hold various important positions in the government machinery.<sup>199</sup> ABIM itself, though in the early stage was sceptical of the government's Islamization policy, later perceived it as a positive sign and viewed that its members' participation in the government and UMNO was commendable as they could contribute to Islam in their different significant positions in the civil service, private sector, business and higher learning institutions.<sup>200</sup> ABIM as a non-political organization believed that the infiltration of UMNO and government by its identified members would be an effective means to Islamize the party and the government.<sup>201</sup> This approach seemed to be working at the beginning and it was said that this success relied mostly on Anwar's success in the government. However, when Anwar was dismissed from the government and UMNO in 1998, ABIM's infiltration

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<sup>197</sup>See Hussin Mutalib, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia*, op.cit., p. 92. This reason might be valid until Anwar was tragically dismissed by Mahathir from his position of Deputy Prime Minister, Finance Minister, Deputy President and member of UMNO in September 1998, as upon the dismissal he accused Mahathir as un-Islamic and anti-*ulama*. See for example, *Harakah*, 10 Sept. 1998.

<sup>198</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 92-93.

<sup>199</sup>On the participation of ABIM's figures in the government and UMNO, see Badlihisam Mohd Nasir, "Infiltrasi Sebagai Metode Dakwah: Pengalaman Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM), in *Al-Maw'izah*, vol. 7, June 1999, pp. 72-83.

<sup>200</sup>Husin Mutalib, *Islamic Revivalism in Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 97-98.

<sup>201</sup>On infiltration as a strategy of ABIM's *dakwah*, see Badlihisam Mohd Nasir, "Infiltrasi Sebagai Metode Dakwah," op. cit., pp. 71-89.

effort reached a deadlock.<sup>202</sup>

The absence of Anwar in UMNO and the government cabinet has also brought the Islamization policy into question. As UMNO and the government had disposed of their Islamic champion, their commitment to Islam and Islamization policy was doubted. For certain people, especially the PAS' leaders who have consistently been sceptical of the government's policy of Islam, this has proven the hypocrisy of UMNO and government whose very purpose of pretending to be Islamic is to keep out Islam from state policy.<sup>203</sup> ABIM itself, at one stage when it felt that Anwar was not fairly treated by the government over his dismissal, detention and trial, showed its strong disagreement with the government, whilst many of its figures in UMNO quitted the party and joined the Parti Keadilan Nasional (KeADILan), the newly-founded party established by Anwar's supporters.

From this analysis, it is plausible to say that UMNO and the government were seen to be serious in their Islamization policy only when Anwar and his fellows in ABIM participated in the party and the government. With the loss of Anwar and his Islamist companions, the catalysts of the government's Islamic pursuits, the UMNO and the government appear awkward in managing its Islamic policies. Moreover, to a certain extent, the government seems to have employed a more combative approach in responding to the pressures from Islamic groups and the Malay Muslim masses. This is evident in instances such as the recurrent detention of Islamic activists under the ISA,

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<sup>202</sup>Anwar was dismissed by Mahathir on the allegation of behavioural misconduct. He was brought to trials in court on accusations of abuse of office and sexual misconduct. In this so-called politically tainted trial, he was found guilty on both accusations and sentenced to imprisonment for 15 years. Anwar's supporters strongly believe that he had been a victim of the political conspiracy of Mahathir and several UMNO corrupt leaders who wanted to check Anwar's influence in the party, since the latter is said to have planned to topple Mahathir's leadership. Anwar's case has been a subject of criticism on Mahathir's government, locally and internationally. His dismissal resulted in a big political impact of the country, witnessing frequent massive demonstrations and nationwide public protest against Mahathir, UMNO and government; the emergence of political reform movement "*reformasi*"; the unity of all opposition parties in the front of Barisan Alternatif; the formation of Gerak by most NGO groups to support Anwar; the establishment of Parti Keadilan Malaysia led by Anwar's wife to fight for justice for Anwar; and above all, UMNO itself severely lost its influence among the Malay populace. On this subject, see for example, John Hilley, *Malaysia, Mahathirism, Hegemony and the New Opposition* (London and New York, Zed Books, 2001), Chapters 5-8, pp. 151-226; Razali Endun, *Anwar Ibrahim, Doa dan Airmata* (Kuala Lumpur: Muttaqin Sdn. Bhd. 2001).

<sup>203</sup>See *Harakah*, 16-31 January 2002.



the restriction imposed on the publishing of PAS' newspaper *Harakah*, the issuance of strict rules governing public talks (*ceramah*) by PAS, the massive detention of alleged Islamic militants, and the attempts to relate PAS with militancy and so-called Islamic terrorism.<sup>204</sup> This combative approach has further strengthened the criticism against the government of its commitment to Islamic policy.

Notwithstanding the criticism, the government's Islamization programme proceeds in its existing form, without anything new, but rather with more emphasis on the economic development of Muslims due to the economic downturn in 1997. One of the latest government efforts in this sense is the proposal of the establishment of gold-based Islamic *dīnār* currency as a world currency which is to be used in trade transactions between Muslim countries.<sup>205</sup> Though this scheme is still under study, it is regarded as a great effort in reducing the Muslim countries' dependency on the US Dollar, as well as opening up "a new path in the Islamic communities which would be the beginning of the Islamic world."<sup>206</sup> As far as the present time is concerned, the culmination of the government's Islamization policy, perhaps, or the boldest attempt to prove the government's commitment to Islam, is the public declaration made by the Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, in September 2001 that Malaysia is an Islamic State which is based on the principles of Islam.<sup>207</sup> Dr. Mahathir perceives Malaysia as an Islamic state by definition since Article 3 (1) of the Malaysian

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<sup>204</sup>PAS is frequently linked to some Muslim militant groups such as Kumpulan Mujahidin Malaysia, known also as Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM) and Al-Ma'unah group, as many of their activists were members or supporters of PAS. Both groups were said to have a plan to overthrow the current government by *jihād* and create an Islamic state by revolution. Their members were detained under the Internal Security Act as they were regarded as a threat of nation's security. See for example, *Utusan Malaysia*, 24 July 2000; 4 August 2001; 5 January 2002.

<sup>205</sup>See *Utusan Malaysia*, 24 July 2001. The establishment of a gold-based Islamic dinar currency in the present time was initiated by the Scotland-based Murabitun Worldwide Movement founded by the renowned Muslim scholar Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir Al-Šūfi. This movement has been promoting the Islamic gold dinar since it was first minted in 1992. Malaysia, according to Shaykh 'Abd al-Qādir is seen as a potential Muslim country to promote this currency at international level, since its Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir has "realistic approach and modern thinking towards the Islamic currency, and has courage in voicing his opinions on the inadequacy of the capitalist monetary system." See *Utusan Malaysia*, 13 August 2001.

<sup>206</sup>Dr. Mahathir Mohamad is quoted in *Utusan Malaysia*, 13 August 2001.

<sup>207</sup>This declaration was made by him when opening the 30<sup>th</sup> Gerakan Delegates Conference on 29 September 2001. See *Utusan Malaysia*, *Berita Harian*, and *New Straits Times*, 30 September 2001.



Constitution recognizes Islam as a state religion, and Malaysia has been following the Islamic path since independence; and in addition, all development programmes of the government are based on the principles of the Qur'ān and Sunnah.<sup>208</sup> PAS however rejected this view saying that Dr. Mahathir was only playing to the gallery, and trying to restore public confidence in his leadership which was severely eroded after Anwar's case.<sup>209</sup> To PAS, one of the prerequisites of an Islamic state is placing the Sharī'ah law as the supreme source of all laws of Malaysia, and this is not enshrined in the Constitution as yet.<sup>210</sup> Dr. Mahathir, however, perceives that there is no need for Malaysia to ammend its constitution to make it an Islamic State as it is already one such nation.<sup>211</sup>

Upon analysis, it is obvious that the government's policy on Islam, from its Islamization project to the Islamic state declaration, is decided under the pressure of circumstances, i.e. the considerable political pressure by various Islamic groups. As a result of its rivalry with these Islamic groups, and its desire not to be beaten in championing the cause of Islam, the present government is constantly driven to adopt its own Islamic policies and strategies. In doing so, however, the government leaders have frequently referred to its Islamic policies in a broad sense without actually reducing it into specific plans or concrete measures. The general and, in some ways, non-committal aspect of Islamization in Malaysia has enabled critics and commentators to raise questions about the credibility, and even existence of an Islamization policy in Malaysia.<sup>212</sup> The government's Islamization, according to an observer, is not a formal policy; it has no definite starting date and it is undocumented. Its contents have been

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<sup>208</sup>See *Utusan Malaysia*, 8 Oct., 24 Oct. And 26 Nov. 2001.

<sup>209</sup>See *Harakah*, 16-31 Jan. 2002.

<sup>210</sup>See *Utusan Malaysia*, 31 Sept. 2001.

<sup>211</sup>See *Utusan Malaysia*, 6 Oct. 2001.

<sup>212</sup>Mohammad Hashim Kamali, *Islamic Law in Malaysia: Issues and Development* (Kuala Lumpur: Ilmiah Publishers, 2000), p. 163.

mostly made known by verbal statements of UMNO leaders.<sup>213</sup> Though the Islamization project has manifested in a wide range of Islamic products, they are seen as mere symbols which are not truly based on the fundamentals of Islam. In Chandra Muzaffar's words, Islamization is seen as having been "concerned more with the symbols rather than the substance of the religion, with what is peripheral rather than fundamental to Islam."<sup>214</sup> Though Malaysia was recently declared an Islamic State, this declaration seemed very ambiguous and inconsistent with the character of Malaysia which is well-known as a secular country that mostly adopts the Western system in governing the country.<sup>215</sup>

In a positive perspective, nonetheless, it must be admitted that the Malaysian government has been playing an important role in the current stream of Islamic resurgence. In responding to the pervasive Islamic resurgence phenomenon in the country it has adopted its own relevant Islamization policy which is manifested in the various forms of valuable Islamic programmes. In doing so, the government does contribute to the Malaysian experience of Islamic resurgence. From the fact that the government is encouraging a modern Muslim culture in the Malay Muslim community, despite the critical attitude toward conservative Islam by most government leaders, especially Dr. Mahathir himself, it can be assumed that the Malaysian government is an advocate of Islamic reform. Thus, as the Islamic resurgence continues to develop in Malaysia, it is expected that Islamic reformism will increasingly be growing in Malaysia in years ahead.

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<sup>213</sup>See Norhashimah Yasin, "Islamisation or Malaynisation? A Study on the Role of Islamic Law in the Economic Development of Malaysia." Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 1994, p. 367.

<sup>214</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, "Islamisation of State and Society: A Critical Comment," in Noraini Othman (ed.) *Shari'a Law and The Modern Nation State*, op.cit., p. 116.

<sup>215</sup>For many people, this declaration is seen merely as Mahathir's political statement which is made to meet PAS President Fadzil Noor's challenge for him to do so. See *Utusan Malaysia*, 6 Oct. 2001. It is said that if Mahathir was really serious to make such declaration, he would declare Malaysia as an Islamic State officially in the Malaysian Parliament, not in the conference of small Chinese political party, the Gerakan, as he did. See *Utusan Malaysia*, 1 Oct. 2001.

## CHAPTER THREE

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### THE ISLAMIC PHILOSOPHY OF <sup>ʿ</sup>*IBĀDAH*

#### The Concept of <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādah*

#### The Lexical Meaning of <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādah*

The Arabic term <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādah* is derived from the root <sup>ʿ</sup>*abada* which means to serve, obey, worship, adore and venerate.<sup>1</sup> The expression <sup>ʿ</sup>*abada Allāh* (to worship Allah) means to deify Allah as God (*ta'allaha lahu*). Lexically <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādah* (plural <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādāt*) means obedience (*ṭāʿah*)<sup>2</sup>, submissive obedience to a master,<sup>3</sup> the ordinances of divine worship,<sup>4</sup> adoration, veneration, act of worship, act of devotion and religious observance.<sup>5</sup> The terms <sup>ʿ</sup>*ubūdiyyah* and <sup>ʿ</sup>*ubūdah* which are derived from the same root also have the same meaning as <sup>ʿ</sup>*ibādah*, i.e., obedience,<sup>6</sup> humble veneration, homage, adoration and worship, obedience with humility or submissiveness.<sup>7</sup> In the Qur'ān, the

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<sup>1</sup>See Aḥmad Riḍā, *Muḥjam Matn al-Lughah Mawsūʿat Lughawīyyah Ḥadīthah* (Beirut: Dār Maktabah al-Ḥayāh, 1960), vol. 4, p. 9; Edward William Lane, *Madd al-Qāmūs, an Arabic - English Lexicon* (London and Edinburgh: Williams and Norgate, 1874), book 1, part 5, p. 1934; Cyrill Glasse, *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (London: Stacey International, 1989), p. 167.

<sup>2</sup>See Jamāl al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Makram ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab* (Beirut: Dār Sādir, no date), vol. 3, p. 272; Al-Saiyyid Muḥammad Murtaḍā al-Ḥusaynī al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿArūs min Jawāhir al-Qāmūs*, edited by ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz Maṭr (Kuwayt: al-Turāth al-ʿArabī, Matbaʿah Ḥukūmahal-Kuwayt, n.d.), vol. 8, p. 330.

<sup>3</sup>G. H. Bousquet, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edition, vol. III, p. 647.

<sup>4</sup>H. A. R. Gibb and J. H. Kramer, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, London: Luzac, 1953), p. 143.

<sup>5</sup>J. Milton Cowan (ed.), *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic* (London: MacDonald and Evans Ltd., 1980, third edition), p. 586.

<sup>6</sup>See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 272; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-ʿArūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 330; Aḥmad Riḍā, *Muḥjam Matn al-Lughah*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op.cit., book 1, part 5, p. 1934 and 1936; Cowan, *A Dictionary of Modern Written Arabic*, op.cit., p. 586.

term *‘ibādah* is usually found in this sense:<sup>8</sup> "Lord of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between them, so worship Him (*fa-‘bud-hu*) and be constant and patient in His worship (*li-‘ibādatih*)" (19: 65); "Whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, let him work righteousness and associate none as a partner in the worship (*bi-‘ibādat*) of His Lord" (18: 110).

In Arabic usage, there are many words which originate from the root word *‘abada* which signify various meanings. For example, the word *‘abd* (plural *‘abdūn*, *‘abīdūn*, *‘abīd*, *‘bud*, *‘bidah*, *‘ibād* etc.), literally means slave or servant (*mamlūk*) and it is used metaphorically to mean human being (*al-insān*) as the servant of God, whether he is free (*ḥurr*) or bonded as a slave (*raqīq*) by assuming that all mankind are the servants of God.<sup>9</sup> The verb *ta‘abbada* (noun *ta‘abbud*) means to lead a devout life (*tanassaks*, noun *tanassuk*),<sup>10</sup> and it also means to take someone as a slave (*ittakhadha fulānan ‘abdan*).<sup>11</sup> The word *al-mufabbad* also has various meanings. On the one hand, it is used to imply someone who is being adored and revered (*al-mukarram*, *al-mu‘azzam*, *al-makhdūm*), and on the other, it means passable (of road),<sup>12</sup> tame (of

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<sup>8</sup>The word *‘ibādah* appears nine times in the Qur’ān, see Qur’ān 18: 110; 10: 29; 4: 172; 7: 206; 19: 65; 21: 19; 19: 82; 46: 6; 40: 60.

<sup>9</sup>Ibn Manẓūr and al-Zabīdī cited Sībawayh as saying that, originally, the word *‘abd* is an adjective but then is used as a noun. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 270; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, vol. 8, op.cit., p. 327; Aḥmad Riḍā, *Mu‘jam*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 8. Some scholars say that the word *‘abd* is used to indicate a black male slave and the word *mamlūk* is used for a white slave. See for example, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 13; Gibb and Kramer, *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op.cit., p. 3; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op.cit., book 1, part 5, p. 1935. The word *abd* is also used to denote a type of plant which camels like, a type of wide short sword and a mountain, see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 276; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 333.

<sup>10</sup>See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 272; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 341; Aḥmad Riḍā, *Mu‘jam*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 8; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op.cit., book 1, part 5, p. 1934.

<sup>11</sup>Same meaning with verbs *‘abbada*, *‘bada*, *ṭtabada* and *istābada*, see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 3, p. 272; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, vol. 8, p. 341; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, book 1, part 5, p. 1934. Apart from those meanings it also means obstinate and wild (*imtaḍa wa ṣḍ uba*) and it is commonly used of an animal which cannot be domesticated, as the Arabs say, *‘ta‘abbada al-ba‘īr*, which means to chase away the camel so it becomes wild, or *‘al ba‘īr al-muta‘abbid* which means camel which cannot be domesticated. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, vol. 3, p. 274; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, vol. 8, p. 341; Aḥmad Riḍā, *Mu‘jam Matn al-Lughah*, vol. 4, p. 8.

<sup>12</sup>As they say, *‘al-ṭarīq al-mu‘abbad* means passable and smooth road (*maslūk mudhallal*). See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 274; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 340; Aḥmad Riḍā, *Mu‘jam*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 8.

animal),<sup>13</sup> the place that has no sign (*athar*), distinguishing mark (*‘alam*) or water (*mā’*),<sup>14</sup> and other meanings.<sup>15</sup> Yet, for instance, the phrase “*‘abada bihī*” means to annoy someone (*‘adhāhū*)<sup>16</sup> and to keep close with someone and never part (*lazimahū wa lam yufāriqhū*).<sup>17</sup> The phrase “*mā‘abadaka ‘annī*” means “what has withheld you from me” (*mā habasaka ‘annī*)<sup>18</sup> and *‘abada yā dū* represents to speed up (*asrā a bā da isrā*).<sup>19</sup>

Although such words share the root *‘abada* with *‘ibādah*, their meanings seem somewhat far from the real meaning of *‘ibādah* used in Islamic literature. Regardless of those words which might not have had a related meaning with *‘ibādah*, we shall look particularly at the definition of *‘ibādah* in Islamic literature.

## The Concept of *‘ibādah* in Islamic Literature

The term *‘ibādah* gives us both the widest and most fundamental Arabic words for the approach of man to God. It is commonly used in Islamic literature and frequently

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<sup>13</sup>*Al-ba‘īr al-mu‘abbad’* means tame camel (*al-mudhallal*). See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 274; al-Zabīdī, op.cit., *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, vol. 8, p. 340; Aḥmad Riḍā, *Mu‘jam*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 8; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op.cit., book 1, part 5, p. 1934.

<sup>14</sup>See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 274; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 340.

<sup>15</sup>Such as suffering from mange (*jarab*) (see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 274), tarred (*al-mahnu’ bi al-qaṭīrān*), tent peg (*al-watīd*) (see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 274; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 340), sexually excited male camel (*al-mughṭalīm min al-fuhūl*) (see al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 340), and ship smeared by tar or pitch (*al-safīnah al-muqayyarah*) (see Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 274; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 341).

<sup>16</sup>See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 272; al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 340; Aḥmad Riḍā, *Mu‘jam Matn al-Lughah*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 8; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op.cit., book 1, part 5, p. 1934.

<sup>17</sup>al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 344.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.; Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op.cit., book 1, part 5, p. 1934.

<sup>19</sup>al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 344.



mentioned in the Qur'ān and Ḥadīth. During the Jāhiliyyah period,<sup>20</sup> the term *‘ibādah* was used to mean obedience (*ṭā‘ah*) in general and religious observance (*al-‘ibādah*) in particular.<sup>21</sup> In this period, most of the Arabs, as well as believing in God, were idol worshippers. Therefore, it was customary to name children with appellations incorporating the name of God or the idols,<sup>22</sup> such as *‘Abd Allāh* (servant of God) and *‘Abd al-Raḥmān* (servant of al-Raḥmān<sup>23</sup>), *‘Abd al-‘Uzzā* (servant of al-‘Uzzā - the Banū Thaḳīf’s idol of Ṭā’if) and *‘Abd Yaghūth* (servant of Yaghūth - the ancient idol). Hence, although the word *‘ibādah* in the Qur’ān is usually used for God, it is also used for something else, such as for idols (*al-aṣṇām* or *al-ṭāghūt*) (14:35; 5:60), for Satan (*al-shayṭān*) (36:60), and for Pharaoh (*Fir‘awn*) (23:47). However, according to most Qur’ān commentators, *‘ibādah* is originally used only for God, and if it is used for anything else they would simply interpret it as obedience to or worship of those things.<sup>24</sup> The meaning of *‘ibādah* in Islamic literature will be examined in the following paragraphs.

As an Islamic technical term, the term *‘ibādah* has been variously defined, depending on various scholars’ perceptions. In Qur’ānic exegesis, apart from conveying

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<sup>20</sup>Details of *‘ibādah* in the period of Jāhiliyyah will be given in the next section. See pp. 116-139.

<sup>21</sup>The obedience (*ṭā‘ah*) meaning was used generally regarding slavery (*al-ta bī‘*, *al-ta abbud* or *al-isti‘bād*). See Abu A`la Mawdudi, *al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Arba‘ah fī al-Qur’ān*, transl. "Empat Istilah dalam al-Quran" (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 1981), p. 86.

<sup>22</sup>Or servant to other creatures, such as the sun, that they worshipped. However, those names might be their nicknames, not the real name, as it was customary at the time that one person had more than one name. In as much as slavery was a usual phenomenon within this period, there would have been some people whose names were connected to their master, but it might be their nicknames and not their proper names. It was mentioned that the name of the Prophet Muḥammad’s grandfather, *‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib* (Ibn Hāshim) was given to him because he was mistaken for the slave of al-Muṭṭalib. However, this statement is not acceptable as his family, Banū Hāshim was known as noblemen among the Arabs of Makkah. See W. Montgomery Watt, "‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new ed., vol. 1, p. 80.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Raḥmān: one of God’s names means "the Most Gracious"

<sup>24</sup>See for example, Jār Allāh Tāj al-Islām Fakhr Khawārizm Maḥmūd Ibn ‘Umar al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf ‘an Ḥaqā’iq Ghawāmiḍ al-Tanzīl wa-‘Uyūn al-Aqāwīl fī Wujūh al-Ta’wīl* (Anonymous place: Maṭbā‘at Awlā al-Sharqiyyah, no date), vol. 1, p. 8 and passim; Nāsir al-Dīn Abī Sa‘īd ‘Abd Allāh Ibn ‘Umar Ibn Muḥammad al-Shīrāzī al-Baiḍāwī, *Tafsīr al-Baiḍāwī al-Musammā Anwār al-Tanzīl wa Asrār al-Ta’wīl* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1988), vol. 1, p. 9 and passim. All commentators used to give special meaning for the word *‘ibādah* which is used for God and usually relate it with *tawḥīd* (the doctrine of the singularization God). However, everytime they came across the word *‘ibādah* which is not regarded to God, they simply interpreted it as obedience (*ṭā‘ah*) or worship (the word used is also *‘ibādah*).



the basic and general meaning of *‘ibādah*, i.e. obedience (*ṭā‘ah*), the commentators tend to interpret *‘ibādah* by its connotative meanings. Al-Ṭabarī,<sup>25</sup> in interpreting Q. 1:5, (*īyyā-ka na‘budu wa īyyā-ka nasta‘īn*) - You [Alone] we worship and You [Alone] we ask for help), says that *‘ibādah* means humility (*khushū‘*), submissiveness (*tadhallul*) to God and humbleness (*istikān*). Al-Fakhr al-Rāzī in his *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*<sup>26</sup> defines *‘ibādah* as the ultimate glorification (*nihāyat al-tā‘īm*), as this is not suitable for anybody except for God and because such glorification is not appropriate for anybody except for the one from whom ultimate bestowal (*nihāyat al-in‘ām*) comes, and such bestowal comes only from God. Al-Qurṭubī<sup>27</sup> simply defines *‘ibādah* as obedience (*ṭā‘ah*) and submissiveness (*tadhallul*). In another place, he clarifies it as the acknowledgement of the divinity of God and submission to His commandments and wishes.<sup>28</sup> Ibn ‘Arabī<sup>29</sup> in his commentary of Q. 2: 21 says, the phrase “*‘udūd rabbakum*” (worship your Lord) signifies the call to profess the unity of God. Ibn Kathīr<sup>30</sup> cites Ibn ‘Abbās as saying, in interpreting Q. 1: 5, that the word *na‘budu* means “we profess the unity of God (*nuwaḥḥidu*), we fear (*nakhāfu*) and we hope (*narjū*).”

Al-Baghawī<sup>31</sup> defines *‘ibādah* as obedience (*ṭā‘ah*) with submissiveness (*tadhallul*) and humility (*khushū‘*). He also cites Ibn ‘Abbās as saying, “every time the idea of *‘ibādah* is mentioned in the Qu’rān it refers to the singularization of God

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<sup>25</sup>Abū Ja‘far Muḥammad Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabaī Jāmf al-Bayān‘an Ta’wīl al-Qur’ān*, edited by Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir and Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir (Egypt: Turāth al-Islām, no date), vol. 1, p. 11.

<sup>26</sup>Fakhr al-Rāzī, *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1956), vol. 4, p. 175.

<sup>27</sup>Abū ‘Abdillāh Muḥammad Ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmf li Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* (Cairo: Maṭba‘ah Dār al-Kitāb al-Miṣriyyah, 1935), vol. 1, p. 145.

<sup>28</sup>“*Al-lqrār bi rubūbiyyatihī wa al-tadhallul l amrihī wa mashīatihī*”. See Ibid., vol. 17, p. 55.

<sup>29</sup>Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*, edited by Muṣṭafā Ghālīb (Beirut: Dār al-Andalūs, no date), vol. 1, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup>Abū al-Fidā’ al-Ḥāfiẓ Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, edited by Ḥusayn Ibn Ibrāhīm Zahrān (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1987), vol. 1, p. 42.

<sup>31</sup>Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥusayn Ibn Ma‘ūd al-Farā’ al-Baghawī al-Shāfi‘ī, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī al-Musammā Ma‘ālim al-Tanzīl*, edited by Khālīd ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-‘Ak and Marwān Sawār (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1986), vol. 1, p. 41.

(*tawḥīd*).<sup>32</sup> Then, in his commentary on Q. 51: 56, he mentions that Mujāhid said that the word *li-yaʿbudūn* (for them to worship Me) means “for them to know Me” (*li-yaʿrifūn*).<sup>33</sup> Al-Zamakhsharī<sup>34</sup> and al-Bayḍāwī<sup>35</sup> define *ʿibādah* as ultimate humility and submission (*aqṣā ghāyat al-khudūʿ wa al-tadhallul*) towards God and this word should not be used for anything else except God as He is the Great Master (*al-mawlā al-aʿẓam*), and so He is the only one who should be obeyed. According to Muḥammad ʿAbduh,<sup>36</sup> the term *ʿibādah* is a special word and no other word shares its meaning. The words such as *khudūʿ* (humility), *khanuʿ* (servility), *ṭāʿah* (obedience) and *dhull* (humbleness) which have a close meanings with *ʿibādah* could not replace the meaning of *ʿibādah* itself. He furthermore defines *ʿibādah* as a kind of ultimate submission (*ḍarbun min al-khudūʿ bāligh ḥadd al-nihāyah*) which grows from a consciousness of God’s majesty.<sup>37</sup>

Sayyid Quṭb<sup>38</sup> asserts that the concept of *ʿibādah*, as the main purpose of a human being and his first duty, consists of two things: the first is the establishment (*istiqrār*) of the meaning of submissiveness (*ʿubūdiyyah*) in the soul (*nafs*), i.e. the establishment of the feeling (*shuʿūr*) that there are servants and a Lord: a servant who worships (*ʿabdun yaʿbud*) and a Lord who is worshipped (*rabbun yufʿad*), and nothing in this existence (*al-wujūd*) except servant and Lord, i.e. only one Lord and the others are His servants. The second is turning one’s intention towards God (*al-tawajjuh ila Allāh*) for every single motion (*bi kulli ḥarakat*) of heart, body and life, and this intention should be accompanied by the appreciation of the meaning of worship

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, p. 55; see also, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*. (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat al-Manār, 1346H), p. 219.

<sup>33</sup>Al-Baghawī, *Tafsīr al-Baghawī*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 235.

<sup>34</sup>Al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Kashshāf*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 8.

<sup>35</sup>Al-Baiḍāwī, *Tafsīr al-Baiḍāwī*, op.cit., vo. 1, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup>See Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-Ḥakīm al-Shahīr bi Tafsīr al-Manār* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, no date), vol. 1, p. 57.

<sup>37</sup>Ibid, pp. 57-58.

<sup>38</sup>Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qurʾān* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 13th edition, 1993), vol. 6, p. 3387)

(*ta'abbud*) itself. The manifestation of *'ibādah* is realized by these two things.

According to Abul A`la Mawdudi,<sup>39</sup> the term *'ibādah* is used in three senses: the first is the sense of worship and adoration; the second is in the sense of obedience and submission; and third is the sense of service and subjection. In his commentary on the Q. 1: 5 (*iyyā-ka na'budu*), he notes that the term *'ibādah* in this particular context carries all these meanings simultaneously, as if we were to say to God "that we worship and adore Him, that we are obedient to Him and follow His will, and also that we are His servants."<sup>40</sup> He furthermore says, "moreover, man is so bound to *none save God*, that none but He may be the subject of man's worship and total devotion, of man's unreserved obedience, of man's absolute subjection and servitude."<sup>41</sup> In his *al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Arba'ah fī al-Qur'ān*,<sup>42</sup> after conveying the meanings of *'ibādah* according to various scholars' perceptions, Mawdudi finally comes to the conclusion that *'ibādah* is a noun indicating what God loves and is pleased with, whether it is word or deed, obvious or hidden.

Ibn Taymiyyah clarifies that *'ibādah* should consist of a combination of the meanings of submissiveness and love, i.e., ultimate submission and love towards God.<sup>43</sup> Based on Ibn Taymiyyah's point of view, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī<sup>44</sup> insists that *'ibādah* should consist of two main elements: first, the commitment to what God legislates and what His Messengers order which constitutes obedience (*ṭā'ah*) and submission (*khudū'*) to God; and secondly, the feeling of love (*ḥubb*) for God from which such a commitment must arise.

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<sup>39</sup>Saiyyid Abu A`la Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding the Qur'ān*, (English version of *Tafhīm al-Qur'ān*) translated by Zafar Ishaq Ansari, (Britain: The Islamic Foundation, 1988), vol. 1, p. 37.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Mawdudi, *al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Arba'ah*, op.cit., p. 22.

<sup>43</sup>"*Al-'ibādat al-ma'mūru bihā tataḍammanu ma'nā al-dhull wa ma'nā al-ḥubb, fa hiya tataḍammanu ghāyat al-dhull wa ghāyat al-ḥubb*," see Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-'Ubūdiyyah* (translation) (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 1983), p. 21.

<sup>44</sup>Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-'Ibādah fī al-Islām* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Wahbah, 1985, 15th edition), pp. 22-23.

The jurists generally define *‘ibādah* as a sort (*jins*) of submissiveness (*khuḍū*) which is only worthy of God.<sup>45</sup> In particular, *‘ibādah* is defined by the Ḥanafī *madhhab* as the deed of an obligated person (*mukallaf*) which is in opposition to his own desire (*‘alā khilāf hawā nafsih*) in aggrandizement of his God.<sup>46</sup> Similarly, the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* define *‘ibādah* as the deed obliged by God on His servants contrary to their natural disposition as a trial for them.<sup>47</sup> In the works on jurisprudence (*fiqh*), *‘ibādah* is often referred to as the ordinances of divine worship, i.e. the specific prescribed rites by which mankind expresses his creatureliness, submissiveness and obedience to God,<sup>48</sup> such as prayer, alms giving, fasting and pilgrimage.

The Ṣūfīs’ perception of *‘ibādah* is apparently unique. Among the Ṣūfīs, the meaning of *‘ibādah* differs with what is understood by the generality. For example, Ibn ‘Arabī, a great Ṣūfī who introduced the doctrine of the unity of existence (*waḥdat al-wujūd*), states that true *‘ibādah* is what is implemented with an absolute need on the part of servant, and an absolute independence on the part of God.<sup>49</sup> For him, that which is worthy of worship (*al-ma‘būd*) is the eternal and sempiternal Nature (*al-jawhar al-azālī al-qadīm*), the Erector (*al-muqawwim*) of all forms of existence, while the worshipper (*al-‘ābid*) is the form erected (*al-ṣūrah al-mutaqawwamah*) from the Nature (*al-jawhar*). According to him, the true and supreme type of *‘ibādah* is the realization of the unity of nature (*al-taḥaqquq bi-al-waḥdat al-dhātīyyah*) between the worshipper and God, i.e., the realization by experience (*al-taḥaqquq dhawqan*), that “you are He and He is you: you are He by your form (*min ḥaith ṣūratika*)” and so

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<sup>45</sup>Sa‘dī Abū Jayb, *al-Qāmūs al-Fiqhī*. (Dimashq: Dār al-Fikr, 1988, 2nd ed.), p. 240.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid.

<sup>47</sup>“*Fī l-yukallifu-hu Allah Ta‘ālā ‘ibāda-hu mukhālīfan li-mā yamīl ilayh al-ṭab‘ ‘alā sabīl al-ibtilā’.*” See Ibid.

<sup>48</sup>See H.A.R. Gibb, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 143; Constance E. Padwick, *Muslim Devotion*. (London: S.P.C.K., second ed. 1969), p. 6.

<sup>49</sup>“*Al-‘ibādah al-ḥaqqah hiya mā taḥaqqaq fihā al-iftiqār al-muṭlaq min jānib al-‘abd wa al-ghinā min jānib al-Ḥaqq*”, see Muḥyi al-Dīn Ibn ‘Arabī, *Fusūs al-Ḥikam*, edited by Abū al-‘Alā Afīfī, (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1980), vol. 1, p. 34.

on.<sup>50</sup>

The Ṣūfis tend to emphasize the inner dimension of *‘ibādah*, and therefore, they always distinguish between ordinary *‘ibādah* and real or true *‘ibādah*. In doing so, they normally classify *‘ibādah* into three divisions, namely *‘ibādah*, *‘ubūdiyyah* and *‘ubūdah*. According to ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī (d.1329), *‘ibādah*, i.e. the utmost self-abasement, is associated with the common people. *‘Ubūdiyyah* is for the Elect (*al-Khāṣṣah*) - those who have corrected their relationship with God - their veneration lies in the sincerity of their intent and the manner in which they follow his path. *‘Ubūdah* is for the Elect among the Elect (*Khāṣṣat al-Khāṣṣah*) - those who have experienced themselves established in Him their adoration - they worship Him for Himself in the stage of the oneness of union and separation.<sup>51</sup> Similarly ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Qushayrī (d. 1072) says:<sup>52</sup>

“*‘Ubūdiyyah* is nearer perfection than *‘ibādah*. First comes *‘ibādah*, then *‘ubūdiyyah*, then *‘ubūdah*. *‘ibādah* is for all believers, *‘ubūdiyyah* for the inner circle, and *‘ubūdah* for the innermost circle. I have heard Abū ‘Alī al-Daqqāq says, *‘ibādah* is for those who possess the certainty of intellectual proof, *‘ubūdiyyah* is for those who possess the certitude of immediate knowledge, *‘ubūdah* is for those who are possessed by certitude. I have heard him say, *‘ibādah* is for him who fights the good fight; *‘ubūdiyyah* is for those who endure hardness, and *‘ubūdah* is a quality of the people of vision.”

In distinguishing *‘ibādah* from *‘ubūdiyyah*, it is said that *‘ibādah* is to carry out what God is pleased with whilst *‘ubūdiyyah* is to be pleased with what God does. It is also said that *‘ibādah* consists of three things: obeying the commandments of God; having them unconcealed; and to be satisfied with them; whilst *‘ubūdiyyah* consists of four things: fulfilment of promises, feeling pleasure with God’s promise, preservation of divine laws and patience during lack.<sup>53</sup> In other words, *‘ibādah* is a physical practice, i.e. the accomplishment of God’s injunctions; *‘ubūdiyyah* is a

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<sup>50</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, p. 33.

<sup>51</sup>Qamar al-Dīn ‘Abd al-Razzāq al-Qāshānī, *Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Ṣūfiyyah - Glossary of Sufi Technical Terms*, translated by Nabil Safwat, ed. by David Pandlebury. (London: The Octagon Press, 1991), p. 65.

<sup>52</sup>Abū al-Qāsim ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Hawāzin al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah al-Qushayriyyah*. (Cairo: Maṭba‘ah al-Taqaḍḍum, al-‘Ilmiyyah, no date), pp. 91-92.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

spiritual activity, i.e. the pleasure with God's laws, while *‘ubūdah* is a secret substance.

From the various definitions mentioned above, it is apparent that *‘ibādah* is an all inclusive term used to indicate what God loves and is pleased with. This comprises the internal and external actions of a person, including belief as well as rituals, social activities and others, which will be elaborated in the forthcoming section.

### *‘ibādah* in the Qur’ān

In the Qur’ān, there are about 415 verses that concern *‘ibādah*: 140 verses pertain to the practices of *‘ibādāt* (*‘ibādāt ‘amaliyyah*) and its regulations (*aḥkāṁ*)<sup>54</sup> including purity (*ṭahārah*), prayer (*ṣalāh*), alms (*zakāh*), fasting (*ṣiyām*), pilgrimage (*ḥajj*), supplication (*du‘ā’*), remembrance (*dhikr*), and so forth; and 275 verses consist of expressions mentioning *‘ibādah*<sup>55</sup> in various forms such as the commandment of *‘ibādah*, the nature of *‘ibādah*, the act of *‘ibādah*, and that of the person who performs *‘ibādah*. 222 of the verses are Meccan and 53 are Madinan.<sup>56</sup> These 275 verses can be divided into several grammatical categories. The first is the verb category that contains words indicating the act (*fi‘l*) of *‘ibādah*, whether in the forms of present tense (*fi‘l muḍāri‘*), past tense (*fi‘l māḍī*), or in the form of a command (*fi‘l amr*). These words can be found in 123 places in the Qur’ān. The second is the noun category, which appears 9 times in the Qur’ān. The third category refers to the person who does the act of *‘ibādah* (*‘ābidūn* or *‘abīd*); or humans who are addressed as the servants of God (*‘ibād*, sing. *‘abd*); or slave (*‘abd*), and these are mentioned in 143 places in the Qur’ān.

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<sup>54</sup>See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa-Adillatuh*. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, third ed. 1989), vol. 1, p. 19.

<sup>55</sup>See Muḥammad Fu’ād ‘Abd al-Bāqī, *al-Mufjam al-Mufahras li-Alfāẓ al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*. (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1987), pp. 441- 445.

<sup>56</sup>See Maḥmūd Ruḥānī, *al-Mufjam al-Iḥṣā’ li-Alfāẓ al-Qur’ān al-Karīm*. (Iran: Mu’assasat Chāb, 1990), vol. 1, p. 489.



Regarding the use of the term *‘ibādah* and its meaning, there are at least three meanings of *‘ibādah* used in the Qur’ān. Firstly, the word *‘ibādah* is used in the sense of service and servitude. In this sense, the usual word used is *‘abd* (pl. *‘abīd* or *‘ibād* means servant or slave), and it is also used to denote human beings as they are considered as servants of God. Among the verses suggesting the meaning in this sense are:

“And this is the favour with which you reproach me, that you have enslaved (*‘abbad-ta*) the Children of Israel” (26: 22).

“O you who believe, *qisās* is prescribed for you in case of murder: a free man for a free man, a slave (*‘abd*) for a slave (*‘abd*), and a female for a female...” (2: 178)

“Whoever does righteous deeds, does so for (the benefit of) his own self, and whoever does evil, does so against his own self, and your Lord is not unjust to (His) servants (*‘abīd*)” (41: 46).

“Alas for mankind (*al-‘ibād*), there never came a Messenger to them but they used to mock at him” (36: 30).

Secondly, the term *‘ibādah* is used in the Qur’ān to mean obedience and submission.<sup>57</sup> On the one hand, it is used to mean obedience and submission to God, which is usually obscured by the meaning of worship, and on the other, it is used to mean obedience to others such as Satan and other human beings, which is sometimes hidden by the meaning of worship also. *‘ibādah* in this sense is often used in relation to the latter rather than God. The Qur’ān commentators usually interpret *‘ibādah* of Satan or human beings as obedience (*ṭa‘ah*) to them, and not to mean worshipping them in specific rites,<sup>58</sup> for it is very rare to find one who really worships Satan<sup>59</sup> or human beings in a form of particular rites. The Qur’ān mentions:

<sup>57</sup>See Abū ‘Abīd Aḥmad al-Harawī, *al-Gharḥ bayn*. (Hyderabad: Oriental Publication, 1989), vol. 4, p. 61.

<sup>58</sup>See for example, the commentary of al-Qurṭubī in his *al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān* on Q. 19: 44, (vol. 11, p. 75), and on Q. 36: 60 (vol 15: 32); Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 199 and vol. 3, p. 60. See also Muḥammad ‘Abduh, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 56-57.

<sup>59</sup>According to the Qur’ān, one is either in the party (*ḥizb*) of God or in the party of Satan (Q. 58: 19-22), and there is no third party. Whoever turns away from the party of God will be in the party of Satan, and vice versa. Hence we can say that one who does not worship God is a worshipper of Satan, whether he is aware of it or not. Obedience to Satan means that one refuses to obey God’s commandments, and in this case Satan will be his master and his companion, as signified by the following verses: “Verily, We made the Satans guardians (*awliyā’*) for those who do not believe (in Us),” (7: 27); “And whoever turns away from the remembrance of the Most Beneficent (God) We appoint for him Satan to be an intimate companion (*qarīn*) to him” (43: 36-37).

"And among mankind are some who obey (*yābud*) God as it were, upon the very edge (*‘alā ḥarf*) (in doubt); if good befalls him, he is content therewith, but if a trial befalls him, he turns back on his face. He loses both this world and the Hereafter. That is the evident loss" (22: 11).

"(Abraham said), 'O my father, do not worship (obey) (*tābud*) Satan. Verily, Satan has been a rebel against the Most Beneficent (God)'" (19: 44).

"Did I not ordain for you, O children of Adam, that you should not worship (obey) (*tābudū*) Satan. Verily, he is a plain enemy to you" (36: 60)

"They (Pharaoh and his chiefs) said, 'Shall we believe in two men (Moses and Aaron) like ourselves, while their people are obedient to us (*‘ābidūn*)'" (23: 47)

Thirdly, the term *‘ibādah* is used in the Qur’ān to denote worship or devotional practice, which is used for both God and something else, especially idols. This meaning is used more frequently in the Qur’ān than the first and the second meanings:

"O mankind, worship (*‘budū*) your Lord who created you and those who were before you, so that you may become pious" (2: 21).

"Verily, I am God (Allāh), there is no god but I, so worship Me (*fābudnī*), and establish the prayer for My remembrance" (20: 14)

"(Abraham said) You worship (*tābudū*) besides God only idols, and you only invent falsehood. Verily those whom you worship (*tābudūn*) beside God have no power to give you provision. So seek your provision from God, and worship Him (*wa-budūh*), and be grateful to Him. To Him you will be brought" (29: 17)

"And they (disbelievers) worship (*yābudūn*) besides God that which can neither profit them nor harm them, and the disbelievers are ever helpers (of the Satan) against his Lord" (25: 55)

It is noteworthy that some instances of the word *‘ibādah* in the Qur’ān convey these three meanings simultaneously, namely, submission to a master, obedience and worship. Hence, the important semantic development shown by the word *‘ibādah* in the Qur’ān, which originally literally means "obedience (*ṭā‘ah*) and submission (*khudū‘*),"<sup>60</sup> eventually comes to mean "worship" (*‘ibādah*). This association of concepts is clearly shown in the following verse:

"Lord of the heavens and the earth and all that is between them. So worship (serve) Him (*fābudhu*), and be steadfast in His worship (*li-‘ibādatih*)" (19: 65).

<sup>60</sup>See al-Zabīdī, *Tāj al-‘Arūs*, op.cit., vol. 8, p. 331.

## The Status and Significance of *‘ibādah* in Islam

From the Islamic perspective, *‘ibādah* is regarded as the most vital duty of man towards God. This essential duty is frequently mentioned in the Qur’ān and constitutes the fundamental and basic principle of Islamic teaching. According to the Qur’ān, God created mankind only for the purpose of worshipping Him. The Qur’ān states, “I (God) have only created *jinn* and men to worship Me” (51:56). Thus, it is clear that in the Qur’ānic view, humans are created for *‘ibādah* and it is their duty to concern themselves with that for which they were created. Accordingly, the commandment of *‘ibādah* is frequently found throughout the Qur’ān<sup>61</sup> especially in the Meccan sūrahs:

“Verily We have revealed the Book to you in truth, so worship God, offering Him sincere devotion.” (39: 2)

“Verily God is my Lord and your Lord, therefore worship Him, this is a way that is straight.” (19: 36)

“Verily, I am God, there is no god but I; so worship me and establish regular prayer to remember Me.” (20: 14)

“O people! Worship your Lord, who created you and those who came before you, that you may become righteous.” (2: 21)

“Worship God and join not any partner with Him.” (4: 36).

From the Qur’ānic perspective, *‘ibādah* is a longstanding testament imposed by God on His servants, the sons of Adam, and has been eternally inserted into the nature of mankind:

“Did I not enjoin on you, O children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan. - Surely he is an avowed enemy to you. - And that you should worship Me? This is the straight way” (36: 60-61).

This longstanding testament is referred to elsewhere in the Qur’ān:

“When your Lord drew forth from the children of Adam out of their loins their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, (saying): ‘Am I not your Lord’, they said, ‘ Yes! We do testify!’ (This), lest you should say on

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<sup>61</sup>There are 36 verses of the Qur’ān which comprise the commandment of *‘ibādah*. The words which appear in the Qur’ān showing the commandment of *‘ibādah* are: *u‘bud* (3 times), *u‘budnī* (once), *u‘budhu* (twice), *u‘budū* (20 times), *u‘budūn(i)* (3 times), *u‘budūnī* (once), and *u‘budūhu* (6 times). Only 6 of them are of Madinan sūrahs.

the Day of Judgement, 'Verily, we were unaware of this'" (7: 172).

Naturally, all humankind is believed to have the ability to realize and acknowledge the fact that they are created by God, that God is their Lord, and that they are the servants of God: "If you ask them who has created the heavens and earth, they will certainly say, 'God'" (31: 25). The recognition of the Lordliness of God, is the nature of humankind and regarded as an essential base for them to accomplish the commandment of *'ibādah*.<sup>62</sup> To remind them that *'ibādah* is the main objective of their existence, and to guide them to the proper worship of God, the Messengers were sent to every People. The Qur'ān mentions that the call of *'ibādah* is an important mission for all Messengers and is even the main part in their call to God:

"For We assuredly sent amongst every People a Messenger, (with the command) 'worship (*u'budū*) God, and keep away from idols (*ṭāghūt*).'" (16:36)

"Not a Messenger did We send before you without this inspiration sent by Us to him that there is no god but I, therefore worship Me." (21: 25)

"(The Messenger says) 'O my people! Worship God, you have no other god but Him'" (7: 59, 65, 73, 85; 11: 50, 61, 83).

*'ibādah* is, according to a ḥadīth, a right of God that should be fulfilled by His servants, and as a reward, God will fulfil His servants' right, i.e. He will not punish them if they don't associate any partner with Him. The Prophet Muḥammad said:

"God's right upon His servant is that they should worship Him without associating with Him any partner; and the servant's right upon God is that He will not punish whoever does not join with Him any partner"<sup>63</sup>

From the perspective of rationality based on the Islamic textual evidence, i.e. the Qur'ān and Prophet's traditions, the commandment of *'ibādah* obliged by God to mankind means that they are regarded as the servants (*'ibād*) of God. Furthermore,

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<sup>62</sup>Muḥammad 'Abduh, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 182.

<sup>63</sup> See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in "Kitāb al-Jihād wa-al-Siyar," 2644; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in Kitāb al-Īmān," 44; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in "Kitāb al-Īmān," 2567; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in "Kitāb al-Zuhd," 4286; Aḥmad, *Musnad*, in "Musnad al-Anṣār," 20997.

since God is the Absolute Sovereign, the only possible attitude for man to take towards Him is that of complete submission, humbleness and humility without reserve. In short, a "servant" (*ʿabd*) should act and behave as a "servant." The primary function of a servant consists naturally in serving his Master faithfully, paying constant and careful attention to His wishes, and obeying all His commands. This is why so much importance is expressed in the Qur'ān through the use of terms meaning absolute obedience, submission and humility, such as *ṭāʿah* (obedience),<sup>64</sup> *qunūt* (obedience, humbleness),<sup>65</sup> *khushūʿ* (submissiveness),<sup>66</sup> *taḍarruʿ* (self-abasement).<sup>67</sup> These terms may perhaps denote different concepts of obedience, but it is also possible to assume that they are a collection of concepts embodied in the meaning of *ʿibādah* itself.

Moreover, *ʿibādah* should be regarded as a symbol of praise to God for His bestowed favours (*niʿam* - sing. *nīmah*) upon mankind. As His vicegerents on earth (Q. 2: 30), humans have countless favours bestowed on them as stated in the Qur'ān: "If you would count up the favours of God, you would never be able to number them" (16: 18). These favours, in fact, are bestowed on humans to facilitate them to attain the purpose of *ʿibādah*.<sup>68</sup> In ordinary mundane relations between men, human ethics everywhere demand the actualization of the concept of thankfulness. When somebody has given a special favor to someone, his normal reaction to it should be gratitude. Likewise God's favour: for those infinite favours, humans' appreciation of them should be gratitude and thankfulness to God, and the method of such a thankfulness to God is to obey His law, i.e. by serving and worshipping Him alone. "And be grateful for the favours of God, if it is He whom you worship" (Q. 2: 172; 16: 114); "Then seek sustenance from God, and worship Him, to Him you will be returned" (Q. 29: 17); "Nay, but worship God and be of those who give thanks" (Q. 39: 66).

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<sup>64</sup>For example Q. 3: 32; 4: 59; 5: 92.

<sup>65</sup>For example Q. 2: 116; 39: 9; 33: 35.

<sup>66</sup>For example Q. 23: 2; 21: 90; 3: 199.

<sup>67</sup>For example Q. 6: 42; 23: 76; 7: 55.

<sup>68</sup>See al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, op.cit., vol. 9, p. 999.



## The Relationship Between ‘*ibādah*, Islam, *īmān* and *ihṣān*

The Islamic standpoint on ‘*ibādah*, as has already been mentioned before, is clear: that ‘*ibādah* is the sole purpose of the creation of mankind. The method of the accomplishment of this purpose is Islam. The Qur’ān asserts: “The religion in the sight of God is Islam” (3: 19); “If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of Him, and in the Hereafter he will be in the position of those who have lost” (2: 85); “I am pleased with Islam as a religion for you” (5: 3).

Islam in general consists of two basic complementary concepts, ‘*aqīdah* or *īmān* (faith) and *shar‘ah* or *‘amal* (actions). *īmān* is the basis of Islam, or in other words, the foundation of Islam is based on *īmān*. The basic principle (*rukn* pl. *arkān*) of *īmān* consists of belief in six matters as mentioned in the Qur’ān and Ḥadīth: “The Messenger believes in what has been revealed to him from His Lord, as do the believers. All (of them) believe in God, His Angels, His Books, and His Messengers” (2: 285); “O ye who believe! Believe in God and His Messenger, and the scripture which He sent down before. Whoever disbelieves in God, His angels, His Books, His Messengers, and the Day of Judgement, has gone far astray” (4: 136). The Prophet Muḥammad said, replying to Gabriel’s question “what is *īmān*?”: “That you believe in God, His Angels, His Books, His Messengers, in the Hereafter, and the Decree both the good of it and the evil of it.”<sup>69</sup> *īmān* is not only a belief, it is also a practice (*‘amal*) as indicated in the other ḥadīths: The Prophet Muḥammad said, replying to a man’s question “what is the best practice (*‘amal*)?”: “Belief (*īmān*) in God and His Messenger”<sup>70</sup>; “*īmān* is knowledge (*ma‘rifah*) in the heart, confession by the tongue

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<sup>69</sup>See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 48; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān” 10 & 11; al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān wa-Sharā’f uhu,” 4905; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in “Kitāb al-Muqaddimah” 63; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, in “Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn” 9137.

<sup>70</sup>See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 25; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 118; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in “Kitāb Faḍā’il al-Jihād,” 1582; al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, in “Kitāb al-Jihād,” 3079; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, in “Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn,” 8677; al-Dārimī, *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in “Kitāb al-Jihād,” 2286.



and action by the body”<sup>71</sup>; “*Īmān* consists of more than seventy branches. The highest branch of *īmān* is pronouncing ‘there is no god but God (Allāh)’ and the lowest branch of *īmān* is removing a harmful thing from the road, and modesty is a part of *īmān*.”<sup>72</sup> *Īmān* in those ḥadīths is referred to as a form of action. Subsequently, scholars have concluded that *īmān* consists of confession by the heart (*taṣdīq bi-al-qalb*), admission by the tongue (*iqrār bi-al-lisān*), and practice by the body (*‘amal bi-al-jawāriḥ*).<sup>73</sup>

Islam in particular is also referred to as a practice which is also known as *‘ibādah*. This is indicated by the following ḥadīth: “Islam is founded upon five things: bearing witness that there is no god but God (Allāh) and that Muḥammad is His Messenger; observing prayers; payment of alms; performing pilgrimage; and fasting in the month of Ramaḍān.”<sup>74</sup> The five pillars mentioned in the ḥadīth are the fundamentals of *‘ibādah*, which do not mean that *‘ibādah* is limited to these five practices, as all one’s deeds are regarded as *‘ibādah* if they are pleasing to God.

The first part of the above-mentioned ḥadīth i.e. bearing witness to the Lordship of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad denotes the confession of *īmān*. Hence, it is possible to say that *īmān* is simplified in the two-part phrase (*kalimah*): “There is no god but God (Allāh); and Muḥammad is His Messenger,” which also constitutes the first pillar of Islam. Although the first pillar of Islam indicated in the ḥadīth does not mention the other four elements of *īmān*, it is understood that they are embodied in it, as bearing witness of the Lordliness of God and the prophethood of Muḥammad demands belief in the other four matters. The first pillar of Islam is signified in another ḥadīth as *‘ibādah*: “Islam is that you worship God and you do not

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<sup>71</sup>Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in “Kitāb al-Muqaddimah” 64. See also, Abū Maṣṣūr ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb Uṣūl al-Dīn*. (Istanbul: Dār al-Funūn, 1928), vol. 1, p. 251.

<sup>72</sup>See Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 51; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 2539; al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān wa-Sharā’fuhu,” 4919; Abū Dāwūd, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in “Kitāb al-Sunnah,” 4056; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in “Kitāb al-Muqaddimah,” 56; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, in “Musnad al-Mukthirīn,” 8570 & 8994.

<sup>73</sup>See for example, Abū Ya‘lā al-Ḥanbalī, *Kitāb al-Muf tamad fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, edited by Waḍī Zaydān Ḥaddād (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1974), pp. 186-187.

<sup>74</sup>See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 7; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 19 & 22; al-Tirmidhī, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 2534; al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān wa-Sharā’fuhu,” 4915; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, in “Musnad al-Mukthirīn min-al-Ṣaḥābah,” 4567.

associate any partner with Him, that you perform the prayer, pay alms, perform pilgrimage and fast in the month of Ramaḍān.”<sup>75</sup> Therefore, it is possible to regard *īmān* as *‘ibādah* as well. *Imān*, however, is always discerned as a firm belief in heart, and it should be proved by practice i.e. Islam. Given that Islam is perceived as practice,<sup>76</sup> it is possible for someone to be a Muslim without *īmān*, but someone who practises Islam without having *īmān* could be a hypocrite (*munāfiq*) nevertheless. The Qur’ān points out: “The desert Arabs say: ‘We believe.’ Say, ‘You do not believe, but say ‘We have submitted (our wills to God become Muslim).’ For *īmān* has not yet entered your hearts....” (49:14). Thus, it is possible to say, as stated by Abū al-Ḥasan al-Ash‘arī, that every believer (*mu’min*) is a Muslim, but not every Muslim is a believer.<sup>77</sup> The true believer, in fact, is he who possesses *īmān* as well as practises Islam.

*Iḥsān* (righteousness), as depicted by the *ḥadīth* ‘that you worship God as if you see Him; if you do not see Him, indeed He sees you,’<sup>78</sup> is the complementary element of *‘ibādah*. Al-Nawawī, in commenting on this *ḥadīth* says that one who worships God by considering himself as though he sees God will get the highest status of worship as he is aware that he is facing God.<sup>79</sup> Since *iḥsān* is mentioned together with the principles of *īmān* and *Islām*, we can assume it is the most important principle of worship or the highest level of worship.

Hence, the close relationship between *‘ibādah*, *īmān* and Islam is seen: *‘ibādah*

<sup>75</sup>See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 48; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān” 10 - 11; al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān wa-Sharā’f uhu,” 4905; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in “Kitāb al-Muqaddimah,” 63; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, in “Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn,” 9137.

<sup>76</sup>See for example, Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Bajūrī, *Tuḥfat al-Murīd ūlā Jawharat al-Tawḥīd*. (Egypt: Maṭba‘ah Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Awlāduh, 1939), p. 30.

<sup>77</sup>See for example, *Mujarrad Maqālāt al-Shaykh Abī al-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Ash‘arī, min Imlā’i al-Shaykh Abī Bakr Muḥammad b. al-Hasan b. Furak*, ed. by Danīl Jīmārīh (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1987), pp. 155, 160 & 336; see also al-Nawawī’s commentary on *ḥadīth Islām*, *īmān* and *iḥsān* in his *al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1996), vol. 1, p. 102.

<sup>78</sup>See al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān,” 48; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān” 10 - 11; al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, in “Kitāb al-Īmān wa-Sharā’f uhu,” 4905; Ibn Mājah, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in “Kitāb al-Muqaddimah,” 63; Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad*, in “Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn,” 9137.

<sup>79</sup>Al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 112.

is the purpose of the creation of man. Islam in general, i.e. as a religious system, is the way to attain the purpose of *‘ibādah*, and in particular, i.e. as practice, is outer *‘ibādah*. Iman is a basic foundation of Islam and it must be manifested by practice. The practice is called Islam and it is *‘ibādah* as well. Since *īmān* is regarded by scholars as Islam,<sup>80</sup> and Islam is *‘ibādah*; therefore, it is also possible to regard *īmān* as *‘ibādah*. The concept of *‘ibādah* is naturally embodied in *īmān* and Islam, as signified in the meaning of Islam itself, i.e. submission and obedience to the will of God.

### Some Aspects of *‘ibādah* in the Era of Jāhiliyyah

Information about *‘ibādah* in Arabia, or particularly in Makkah in the period of Jāhiliyyah is scarce and mostly relies on accounts of the religion of Arabia itself. The religion of the Arabs in the period preceding Islam, which is known as the state of ignorance, in opposition to the knowledge of God’s true worship taught to them by the Prophet Muḥammad, was mainly idolatry. However, there were some other religions embraced by the Arabs such as the Sabian religion, Christianity, Judaism and the Magian religion.<sup>81</sup> The accounts of Arabian idol worship<sup>82</sup> before Islam are mostly based on Ibn al-Kalbī’s *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*,<sup>83</sup> a classical work of the late second century of the Hijrah. This recounts what is known about a large number of gods and goddesses and about the ceremonies connected with their worship.

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<sup>80</sup>See Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, edited by Faṭḥ Allāh Khalīf (Beirut: Dār al-Mashriq, 1970) pp. 393-401; Abu Ya‘lā al-Ḥanbalī, *al-Mu‘tamad fī Uṣūl al-Dīn*, op.cit., p. 192.

<sup>81</sup>Jawād ‘Alī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-‘Arab Qabl al-Islām* (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm li al-Malāyīn, 1970), vol. 6, pp. 10-123.

<sup>82</sup>Such as, the article by Th. Noldeke, "Arabs (Ancient)" in James Hastings, *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*. (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1908), vol. 1, pp. 659-673; and Jawād ‘Alī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-‘Arab Qabl al-Islām*, op.cit., vol. 6, pp. 12-56.

<sup>83</sup>See Hishām Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols, Translation from the Arabic Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, translated by Nabih Amin Faris (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1952).

The term Jāhiliyyah<sup>84</sup> is often translated as the Age of Ignorance implying a time of paganism before one recognized the oneness of God or knew God's sacred law. However, it does not mean that all Arabs were totally pagans and disbelieved in the "High God". As a matter of fact, there is evidence in the Qur'ān that some individuals, while continuing to recognize pagan deities and to worship them, regarded Allah or God as creator of the world and a "high god" superior to the other deities. Furthermore, in this period there were some Arabs who were dissatisfied with the idolatry and the other religions, and sought the original religion of Abraham that taught about belief in the oneness of God and submission to Him. In the following sections we shall discuss the religion of Arabia in the period preceding Islam.

### The Vestiges of the Religion of Abraham (*Dīn Ḥanīf*)

In the milieu of the deeply rooted idolatrous religion, there were some people who were dissatisfied with the idolatry in which their countrymen were plunged into, and who protested emphatically against the idle and often cruel superstitions of the Arabs.<sup>85</sup> They sought for what they called *al-ḥanīfiyyah*, 'the Religion of Abraham'. These men were called *ḥunafā'*<sup>86</sup> (true believers). Their religion seems to have consisted chiefly in denying the superstition of the Arabs, and in only asserting the existence of one sole-ruling God whose absolute slaves all mankind are, without being able to decide on minor doctrines, or to determine in what manner this one God should be worshipped.

As the *ḥunafā'* could give their countrymen no more definite creed than this,

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<sup>84</sup>On the subject of Jāhiliyyah, see for example, Toshihiko Izutsu, *God and Man in the Qur'ān*. (Tokyo: The Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964), chapter VIII; idem, *Ethico-Religious Concepts in the Qur'ān*. (Montreal: McGill University Press, 1966), pp. 28-35.

<sup>85</sup>On the subject of social life of pre Islamic Arab, see for example, Jawād 'Alī, *Al-Mufaṣṣal fī Tārīkh al-'Arab Qabl al-Islām*, op.cit., vol. 4-5.

<sup>86</sup>*Ḥunafā'* (singular *Ḥanīf*) is derived from word *ḥanafa* means to turn or bend sideways. Here it denotes inclined to right way, orthodox, firm in faith and true. Perhaps the last word, true, sums up most of the other shades. It is used frequently in the Qur'ān in describing the true religion of Abraham which is resumed by Islam.

their influence was very limited. Ibn Ishāq noted a few accounts about the subject in his famous *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*.<sup>87</sup> He narrated that there were four men of Quraysh, known as 'four inquirers', who had gone in search of the true religion of Abraham. They were Waraqah b. Nawfal, 'Ubayd Allāh b. Jahsh, 'Uthmān b. al-Ḥuwayrith and Zayd b. 'Amr.<sup>88</sup> Waraqah decided on Christianity and followed the books of its teachers until he had obtained knowledge of the scripture. 'Ubayd Allāh remained in doubt until, after the revelation, he made profession of Islam and went to Abyssinia. However, when he arrived there he adopted Christianity, parted from Islam, and died there as a Christian. 'Uthmān went to the Byzantine emperor (Qaysar), where he became a Christian and attained high office. The fourth man, Zayd, became neither Jew nor Christian, although he renounced the religion of the Quraysh. He claimed that he worshipped the God of Abraham, and he publicly rebuked his people for their practices. He set forth in search of the religion of Abraham and made inquiries from monks and Jewish priests. He passed through Mesopotamia, and then wandered through the whole of Syria. He died on his way back to Makkah after being attacked.<sup>89</sup>

The other people who were known to be of the religion of Abraham were: Umayyah b. Abī al-Ṣalt, the poet, who used to compose poems about the Expected Prophet, but later after the Prophet Muḥammad was sent, he harbored feelings of hatred against him; and Qiss b. Sā'idah al-Ibādī, the great judge at the time, who used to criticize the Arab's superstitions and remind them of the promised Messenger in his speech to the public.<sup>90</sup> Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī, Ṣirmah b. Abī Anas, 'Āmir b. Al-Ḍarb al-'Udwānī, Khālīd b. Sinān al-'Absī and 'Umayr b. Jundub al-Juhanī were also among the

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<sup>87</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, translated by A. Guillaume. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1978, pp. 99-105.

<sup>88</sup>Ibid; see also Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyyah*, edited by Muṣṭafā al-Saqā, Ibrāhīm al-Abyārī and 'Abd al-Ḥāfiẓ Shalabī. (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-Islāmī, no date), vol. 1, p. 222; Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. 'Uthmān al-Dhabībī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa Wafayāt al-Mashāhīr wa al-A'lāf: al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyyah*, edited by 'Umar 'Abd al-Salām Tadmurī. (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-'Arabī, 1989), book 1, p. 90; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyat wa al-Nihāyah*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 237-238.

<sup>89</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 103; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyyah*, op.cit., p. 232.

<sup>90</sup>Ḥasan Ibrāhīm Ḥasan, *Tārīkh al-Islām: al-Siyāsī wa al-Dīnī wa al-Thaqafī wa al-Ijtīmā'ī*. (Cairo: Maktabah al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 7th ed. 1963), vol. 1, p. 73.



*ḥunafā'*. The *ḥunafā'* also comprised the people who restrained themselves from wine, drunkenness and divination by arrows. <sup>91</sup>Abd al-Muṭṭalib b. Hāshim, Qays b. <sup>92</sup>Āṣim al-Tamīmī and Ḥanzalah al-Rāhib b. Abī <sup>93</sup>Āmir belonged to this category of *ḥunafā'*.<sup>91</sup>

The details of the religion of Abraham were difficult to find. However, the Qur'ān has answered this concern by equating Islam with the religion of Abraham (Q. 4: 125; 6: 161; 16: 123), and therefore, it is conceivable that the religion of Abraham resembled Islam as preached by the Prophet Muḥammad. Before the revelation, the people who were interested in the *ḥanīfiyyah* knew a little of its creed. They knew that only the High God is to be worshipped and He has no associate, and they should abstain from evil deeds, but they knew nothing about the manner in which He should be worshipped. For example, in the case of Zayd b. <sup>94</sup>Amr, as he didn't know the true way of worship,<sup>92</sup> he might only conjecture the worthy manner which he thought suited for God. To show his humility to God, he was seen to pray facing the Ka'bah saying, "My God is the God of Abraham and my religion is the religion of Abraham."<sup>93</sup> Sometimes he was seen to prostrate on the palms of his hands.<sup>94</sup>

On certain occasions Zayd used to compose poems which consisted of his belief in the High God and denunciation of idolatry.<sup>95</sup> Such poems as recorded in Ibn Ishāq's *Sīrat al-Rasūl Allāh* show that Zayd was on the right faith in accordance with the Islamic faith preached later by the Prophet Muḥammad. The Prophet Muḥammad, when he was asked about Zayd said, "God has forgiven and has given mercy to him. Indeed, he died on the religion of Abraham."<sup>96</sup> For his true faith, the Prophet Muḥammad had foreseen him in the Garden under two big trees (*dawḥatayn*).<sup>97</sup> The

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<sup>91</sup>Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb, *al-Muḥabbar*, ed. by Ilse Lichtenstaedter. (Hyderabad: Empire Co., 1942) p. 237.

<sup>92</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 100.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid., p. 102; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyat wa al-Nihāyah*, op.cit., vol . 2, p. 237.

<sup>94</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 100.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid., p. 102.

<sup>96</sup>Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyat wa al-Nihāyah*, op.cit., vol . 2, p. 241.

<sup>97</sup>Ibid; al-Dhahabī , *Tārīkh al-Islām: al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyyah*, op.cit., bk. 1, p. 91.



Prophet also stated that he will be raised from the dead as the sole representative of a whole people (*ummah wāḥidah*).<sup>98</sup>

There were also some rites identified as remnants of the tradition of Abraham especially in matters pertaining to the city of Makkah and regarding the rituals of pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). At the time, Makkah was still regarded as a holy territory as declared by Abraham<sup>99</sup> and was respected by all. At certain seasons, all fighting was forbidden within its limits, arms were not allowed to be carried, and no animal was allowed to be killed.<sup>100</sup> Pilgrimage was performed within the months of Rajab, Dhū al-Qaʿdah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah and al-Muḥarram, however, the pilgrimage to the Kaʿbah was permitted only in the third month.<sup>101</sup> Halting at ʿArafah, circumambulations around the Kaʿbah, walking to and fro with hasty steps seven times between the hills of Ṣafā and Marwah, and making the sacrificial offerings to God, were among the rituals of pilgrimage assumed to be a part of the traditions of Abraham. However, most of these traditions were muddled up with idolatrous superstitions as will be discussed in the next section.

### The *Taḥannuth*<sup>102</sup>

It is noteworthy that in the period of the Jāhiliyyah, there was a religious practice called *taḥannuth*<sup>103</sup> which was said to be practised by the *ḥunafāʾ*. The term

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<sup>98</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 100.

<sup>99</sup>Based on ḥadīth narrated by Muslim, al-Nasāʾī and al-Ṭabarī, see for example, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ḥajj," ḥad. 2439.

<sup>100</sup>Jawād ʿAlī, *al-Mufaṣṣal*, op.cit., vol. 6, p. 237.

<sup>101</sup>In the other three months, they performed pilgrimage to their idols. See *ibid.*, p. 238.

<sup>102</sup>There has been much discussion over the precise meaning of the word *taḥannuth*, although it is clearly some sort of devotional practice. On this subject, see M. J. Kister, "Al-Taḥannuth: an Inquiry into the Meaning of a Term" in M. J. Kister, *Studies on Jāhiliyya and Early Islam*. (London: Variorum Reprints, 1980), pp. 223-236; W. Montgomery Watt, *Muhammad at Mecca*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), p. 44.

<sup>103</sup>*Taḥannuth* is derived from the word *hanitha*, means to practice piety or to seek religious purification. See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 321.

*taḥannuth* was mentioned in some traditions in connection with the first revelation of the Prophet and variously interpreted by scholars. Ibn Ishāq reported:

"The Prophet used to spend one month in every year in religious retreat in Ḥirā' which was a part of *al-taḥannuth* in which Quraysh used to engage during the Jāhiliyyah. *Al-Taḥannuth* is *al-tabarrur*.<sup>104</sup> The Prophet used to spend this month in every year in religious retreat and give food to the poor who came to him. After he completed the month and returned from seclusion, the first thing he would do on leaving before going home was to circumambulate the Ka'bah seven times, or as often as God willed..."<sup>105</sup>

In *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, the tradition giving an account of the same events also contains the expression of *taḥannuth*, but differs in many respects from the tradition of Ibn Ishāq. The passage in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* reads: "...Then he was made to cherish solitude and he was in religious retreat alone in the cave of Ḥirā' and practised *taḥannuth* a number of nights before he returned to his family..."<sup>106</sup> There are other traditions in which the word *tanassuk* is used instead of *taḥannuth*.<sup>107</sup>

The explanation of the word *taḥannuth* is differently given in the two traditions. In the tradition of Ibn Ishāq, it is glossed by *tabarrur* while in the tradition of al-Bukhārī, it is glossed by *ta'abbud*.<sup>108</sup> *Ta'abbud* has a wide range of meanings and commentators are in difficulties to define the *ta'abbud* of the Prophet before his prophethood. Al-Qaṣṭallānī states that the Prophet performed three types of '*ibādah*: going into seclusion (*khalwah*), *taḥannuth*, and watching the Ka'bah. He adds that the idea of *ta'abbud* was assigned exclusively to the practice of seclusion because withdrawal from people, and especially people living in falsehood, is a kind of '*ibādah*.

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<sup>104</sup>*Tabarrur* is translated as religious devotion by Guillaume (*The Life of Muhammad*, p. 105) and self justification by Watt and McDonald (*The History of al-Ṭabarī*, vol. VI, p. 70). Ibn Hishām defines *taḥannuth* as *taḥannuf* from *ḥanifiyyah* i.e., professing *ḥanifiyyah* or performing the actions of *ḥanīf*. See Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyyah*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 235.

<sup>105</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 105.

<sup>106</sup>Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb Bad' al-Wahy," 3.

<sup>107</sup>See al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 121; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawiyyah*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 390.

<sup>108</sup>Ibn Hajar mentioned, the word *taḥannuth* was glossed *ta'abbud* by al-Zuhri. See Ibn Hajar al-Asqalānī, *Fatḥ al-Bārī bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Maṭabā'at al-Salafiyyah wa-Maktabātuhā, 1959), vol. 1, p. 18.

Finally, he quotes an anonymous opinion that the *ta'abbud* of the Prophet was meditation (*tafakkur*).<sup>109</sup>

There are some more traditions reported by many scholars about the practice of *taḥannuth* by the Quraysh as quoted by M. J. Kister.<sup>110</sup> Quoting from al-Balādhurī's *Ansāb al-Ashrāf*, he records the tradition that the first man to practise *taḥannuth* at Ḥirā' was 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib. "He was the first who practised *taḥannuth* at Ḥirā'. (*Taḥannuth*, says the gloss, is *ta'alluh* or *tabarrur*). When the moon of Ramaḍān appeared he used to enter Ḥirā' and did not leave till the end of the month and fed the poor. He was distressed by the iniquity of the people of Makkah and would perform circumambulation of the Ka'bah many times."<sup>111</sup> Kister also notes the tradition recorded by al-Balādhurī, "When the month of Ramaḍān began people of Quraysh - these intending *taḥannuth* - used to leave for Ḥirā' and stayed there for a month and fed the poor who called on them. When they saw the moon of Shawwāl they (descended and) did not enter their homes until they had performed the circumambulation of the Ka'bah for a week. The Prophet used to perform it (i.e. this custom)."<sup>112</sup>

In these two traditions, two elements are emphasized: the feeding of the poor and the ritual practice of the circumambulation of Ka'bah, a symbol of the veneration of the House. These are exactly the elements of *taḥannuth* as related in the tradition of Ibn Ishāq about the Call of Prophecy. Though one might say that this practice was not associated with the religion of Abraham, it is possible to postulate that in this period of Jāhiliyyah, *taḥannuth* was regarded by the *Ḥunafā'* as the right way of *'ibādah*. As there were no trustworthy sources to find the right way of *'ibādah* taught by Abraham, the *ḥunafā'* might have created their own way to worship God which they thought was the worthy way of worshipping God, i.e., by practising *taḥannuth*. The

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<sup>109</sup>See al-Qaṣṭallānī, *Irshād al-Sārī*. (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1326 H.), vol. 1, p. 172.

<sup>110</sup>See M. J. Kister, "Al-Taḥannuth: an Inquiry into the Meaning of a Term", op.cit., pp. 231-234.

<sup>111</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

<sup>112</sup>Ibid., pp. 232-233.

Prophet Muḥammad himself regarded *taḥannuth* as a true way of worshipping God before his prophethood even though it was merely a customary practice initiated by his predecessors.

## Idolatry

### The Origin of Idolatry<sup>113</sup>

From prehistoric times, man has sought to worship powers of nature, or symbols representing those powers, or idols representing those symbols. The first who introduced idolatry is unknown, and it is believed that it was established through religious evolution. As the complete historical account of the origin of idolatry is not available and knowledge on this matter is fragmentary, scholars have propounded many conjectural theories. A favourite theory among 18th century theologians and philosophers was that idolatry was a degeneration.<sup>114</sup> Man was supposed to have begun with a very high and pure idea of the divinity. Afterwards, desiring to have a material picture of his deity, he represented him by the noblest and most elevated thing that he knew, normally in an anthropomorphous image. Gradually he came to regard these symbolic images as real portraits, and in the course of time considered them as divine individualities.<sup>115</sup>

It is also believed that idols were originally the images of deceased ancestors which appeared in the period of the Prophet Noah (Nūḥ). According to Ibn ‘Abbās, within the period between Ādam and Noah, which was about ten centuries’, all

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<sup>113</sup>On this particular subject, see for example, G. D’Alviella and others, “Images and Idols” in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, edited by James Hastings (Edinburgh: T. T. Clark, 1908), vol. 7, pp. 110-163; Leroy S. Rouner, “Idolatry” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited by Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1987), pp. 72-82; Christopher P. North, “The Essence of Idolatry” in *Von Ugarit nach Qumran*, edited by Johannes Hempel and Leonhard Rost (Germany: Berlin, 1958), pp. 151-160.

<sup>114</sup>G. D’Alviella, “Images and Idols,” op.cit., vol. 7, p. 113.

<sup>115</sup>*Ibid.*

mankind were the followers of Islam. After this period the tendency of idolatry increased and Noah was specifically sent to eradicate the idolatry among his peoples.<sup>116</sup> The basic reason for idolatry as narrated by al-Bukhārī, was the adoration of a particular person. He narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās, in commenting on Q. 71: 23, that Wadd, Suwāʿ, Yaghūth, Yaʿūq and Nasr were among the pious men of the Prophet Noah. After they died, the people were very grieved until Satan appeared and suggested that they build statues of each of those pious men and named them accordingly. The statues were to be placed at their regular meeting place, but they were not worshipped. In the course of time, when people became negligent and ignorant, they started to worship those statues.<sup>117</sup>

Ibn Kathīr narrates from Ibn Abī Ḥātim, when mentioning the beginning of idol worship, that there was a man of piety loved by his people. After he died, they felt very sad and mourned on his grave at a place called Bābil. Then, Satan appeared in the shape of a man offering them to portray his image so that they could put it in their circle (*nādī*) and remember him. They agreed and were grateful for it. After a long time, Satan appeared again offering himself to set up for everyone of them a statue (*timthāl*) resembling the image of the deceased man, so that they could put it in their house and easily remember him, and they happily accepted it. Their descendants persisted in remembering the man in this way, and after a long time, as people became negligent, they treated the deceased man's idol as a god apart from the true God.<sup>118</sup> He also noted that the name of the first idol worshipped by people was Wadd,<sup>119</sup> which was named after Wadd, who was Seth (Shīth)<sup>120</sup> the second Prophet of God after his father Ādam.

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<sup>116</sup>Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah*, op.cit., vol. 1, p.101.

<sup>117</sup>See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur'ān, ḥad. 4539.

<sup>118</sup>Ibn Kāthīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-ʿAẓīm*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 667.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Wadd, according to Ibn ʿAsākir while mentioning about the Prophet Seth (Shīth), was one of forty sons of Prophet Ādam. He was known as Shīth and Hibat Allāh. Wadd had four sons, Suwāʿ, Yaghūth, Yaʿūq and Nasr, who are mentioned in the Qur'ān (Q: 71: 23). See Ibn ʿAsākir, *Tahdhīb al-Tārīkh*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 45.

Idolatry is also conceived as the transition of fetishism.<sup>121</sup> At a certain period man began to experience the need for representing, in concrete and personal form, the mysterious forces which he conceived of as being embodied in certain natural or artificial objects and situated at the very source of the phenomena of nature. Man always thought that unusual and strange objects such as big stones and big trees have natural power and therefore they should be respected and worshipped. It is certain that man began at a given moment to make his fetishes in the form of what he believed to dwell inside each one. Fetishism is a direct antecedent of idolatry and is co-existent with it. The fetish and idol are both conceived of as the body of the spirit. They are used for the same purposes and employed under the same conditions, except that idolatry lays more stress on the anthropomorphic, or rather zoomorphic, conception of the divinity, and so lends itself to a more accentuated development of the cult.<sup>122</sup>

Although at the beginning man's idea of God tended to be anthropomorphic, then, fear in primitive life led to the transfer of anything mysterious or imagined to be injurious, to the Pantheon. Such things have to be placated in order that they may not injure man. This led to the worship of animals noxious to man, such as serpent worship, which still prevails in many primitive areas.<sup>123</sup> In ancient Egyptian mythology, for example, the crocodile, the dog, the bull, and the ibis were worshipped, literally and symbolically. They were thought to represent the supernatural beings or became the companions or slaves of the divinities whom they used to embody.<sup>124</sup> However, after men's knowledge developed and they observed the wonderful heavenly bodies and their motions, they began to feel their sublimity, beauty and mystery. Subsequently, they transferred their worship to the heavenly bodies. It is believed

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<sup>121</sup>G. D'Alviella, "Images and Idols," *op.cit.*, p. 114.

<sup>122</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>123</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>124</sup>*Ibid.*



that the worship of heavenly bodies broadened in the period of Abraham<sup>125</sup> among the people of Chaldea,<sup>126</sup> who were regarded as of the first great astronomers. The parable of Abraham in Q. 6: 74-82 points to the importance of the cult of the worship of heavenly bodies and the fallacy among them, alongside idol worship. The Sabian (Ṣābi'ūn) worship of heavenly bodies in Arabia before Islam probably had its source in Chaldea.

### Idolatrous Worship in the Period of Jāhiliyyah

As has been mentioned before, although the Arabs professed faith in the unity of God (Q. 23: 84-89; 29: 61-65; 31: 25; 39: 38; 43: 9-15), it was too shallow as they had adopted idolatry, thinking that their idols<sup>127</sup> would act as intermediaries between them and God, and in particular interceding with God on behalf of men (Q. 39: 3, 10: 18; 30: 12). For them, divine favour could only be obtained through the intercession of the idols. They would, therefore, turn to their pagan deities, invoking their blessing in all sorts of undertakings. Thus, their belief in the one God became as if an empty dogma, finding no place in the system of their practical life. The true worship of God was superseded by the false worship of their idols. However, perhaps it is reasonable to say that the manner of worshipping their idols, such as prostration before them, circumambulation around them, and offering sacrifices to them, and others, were derived from the original acts of worship practiced by the previous prophets as hinted at in the Qur'ān in the parable of Abraham (Q. 2: 125, 128; 37: 103-107). The following paragraphs will highlight how such a debasing idolatry replaced the true worship of God.

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<sup>125</sup>See for example, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyat wa al-Nihāyah*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 140-143.

<sup>126</sup>A region of ancient Babylonia (Arabic Kaldān), the homeland of Abraham.

<sup>127</sup>There were three types of idol worshipped by the heathen Arabs, namely, *aṣṇām* sing. *ṣanām* (idol), i.e., the stone or wood made statues resembled a living form; *aṣṇāb* sing. *nuṣub* (baetyl), i.e., the rude blocks of stone erected in its original shape; and *awthān* sing. *wathan* (images). However, in Islamic literature, sometimes they were used interchangeably.

Idolatry in pre-Islamic Makkah, as reported by Ibn Ishāq<sup>128</sup> and Ibn al-Kalbī<sup>129</sup> originated in the following ways. When the descendants of Ishmael crowded into Makkah and supplanted its original inhabitants, the Amelekites, dissension and strife arose, causing them to fight among themselves. Consequently, they dispersed throughout the land seeking a livelihood. Everyone who left the city took with him a stone from the sacred area (*al-ḥaram*) as a token of reverence to it and as a sign of deep affection for Makkah. Wherever they settled they set it up and circumambulated it in the same manner that they used to circumambulate the Ka'bah before, seeking thereby its blessing and affirming their deep affection for the Sacred House. In fact, the Arabs still venerated the Ka'bah and Makkah and journeyed to them in order to perform the great and lesser pilgrimage, conforming thereby to the time-honored custom which they inherited from Abraham and Ishmael.<sup>130</sup>

In time, this led them to worship what stones they pleased and those which made an impression on them. As generations passed they forgot their former faith and exchanged the religion of Abraham and Ishmael for another. Consequently they took to the worship of images, becoming like the nations before them. They sought and determined what the people of Noah had worshipped of these images and adopted the worship of those which were still remembered among them. According to a tradition recorded by Ibn Ishāq, the first who changed the religion of Ishmael and set up images was 'Amr b. Luḥayy b. Qam'ah b. Khindif of the Khuzā'ah. Ibn Ishāq narrates<sup>131</sup> that Abū Hurayrah said, "I heard the Apostle of God saying to Aktham b. al-Jawn al-Khuza'i, 'O Aktham, I saw 'Amr b. Luḥayy b. Qam'ah b. Khindif dragging his intestines in hell, and never did I see two men so much alike as you and he!' 'Will this resemblance injure me?' asked Aktham. 'No', said the Apostle, 'for you are a believer and he is an infidel. He was the first to change the religion of Ishmael, to set up idols, and institute

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<sup>128</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., pp. 35-36.

<sup>129</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, op.cit., pp. 4-7.

<sup>130</sup>Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>131</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 33. Part of this tradition is also reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. See al-Bukhārī, *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in *Kitāb al-Manāqib*, 3260; Muslim, *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, in *Kitāb al-Jannah*, 5096 and 5097.

the custom of the *baḥīrah*, *sā'ibah*, *waṣīlah* and *ḥāmī*.<sup>132</sup> He took over the custody of the Ka'bah after the Jurhumites. He was held as the worst custodian of the Sacred House in history as he was the first to introduce the idolatry into the land of Arabia.<sup>133</sup> Ibn Hishām<sup>134</sup> and Ibn al-Kalbī<sup>135</sup> report, when mentioning the beginning of idol worship in pre-Islamic Makkah, that when ʿAmr b. Luḥayy became very sick, he was told that there was a hot spring in Balqā', in Syria<sup>136</sup>, and he would be cured if he was to go there. He went to the hot spring, bathed therein, and was cured. During his stay there, he noticed that the inhabitants of the place worshipped idols. He asked them what they were and they replied that to them they prayed for rain, and from them they sought victory over the enemy. He asked them to give him a few of those idols, and they did. He took them back with him to Makkah and erected them around the Ka'bah and afterwards idolatry spread throughout the land of Arabia.

The nomadic way of life and the tribal organization of the Arabs influenced their religious practices: the multitude of deities worshipped in Arabia were tribal deities. Each tribe had its own god or goddess. The mobility of nomadic life led to the adoption of suitable cultic practices. Thus, the members of the tribes could worship their deity anywhere by investing any form of stone with the divine.

Three tribal deities were preeminent in central Arabia, namely, Allāt, al-ʿUzzā and Manāt, the three goddess mentioned in the Qur'ān (Q. 53: 19-22) which were also

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<sup>132</sup>These terms are mentioned in the Qur'ān (5: 103) and their associated practices condemned by Islam. A *Sā'ibah* is a she camel which has given birth to females at ten successive births. She is set free, is never ridden, her hair is not shorn, and only a guest is allowed to drink her milk. A *Waṣīlah* is an ewe which has had ten twin ewes in successive births without a male lamb intervening. A *Baḥīrah* is a she camel having its ears slit. When a she camel or ewe gives birth to five, or seven, or ten, the young ones if male are slaughtered, but if female its ears were slit. The others says that it is the mother of a *Sā'ibah*, and it is exempted from slaughtering and carrying burden. A *Ḥāmī* is a stallion camel who is the sire of ten successive females without an intervening colt. His back is taboo and he is not ridden. His hair is not shorn and he is left to run among the camels to mount them. Beyond that no use is made of him.

<sup>133</sup>Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyat wa al-Nihāyah*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 187.

<sup>134</sup>Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrat al-Nabawīyyah*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 77.

<sup>135</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., p. 7.

<sup>136</sup>Balqā' in present day is in Jordan, near ʿAmmān.

called "the Daughters of Allah".<sup>137</sup> The most ancient of these was Manāt,<sup>138</sup> which was worshipped by the Aws and the Khazraj tribes and such people in Yathrib, and the Azd tribe, and whose sanctuary was at Qudayd, on the Red Sea, near Makkah. Allāt was the goddess of the Thaḳīf tribe but was also revered by the Quraysh. Her sanctuary was at Ṭā'if and was, in the words of Ibn al-Kalbī, "a cubic rock beside which a certain Jew used to prepare his barley porridge".<sup>139</sup> Al-ʿUzzā was the goddess of the Quraysh and Kinanah tribes, located at Ḥurād. The Arabs as well as Quraysh were wont to name their children ʿAbd al-ʿUzzā. Al-ʿUzzā was also the greatest idol among the Quraysh. They used to journey to her, offer gifts unto her, and seek her favours through sacrifices.<sup>140</sup>

Five other deities, all of South Arabian provenance, are also mentioned in the Qurʾān (71: 23 - 24), namely, Wadd, Suwāʿ, Yaghūth, Yaʿūq and Nasr. These are said to have been antediluvian idols, which Noah preached against, and were afterwards taken by the Arabs for gods. Wadd was worshipped under the form of a man by the tribe of Kalb in Dūmat al-Jandal.<sup>141</sup> Suwāʿ was worshipped in the shape of a woman by the Hudhayl tribe in Ruhāt.<sup>142</sup> Yaghūth was an idol in the shape of a lion, and was the deity of the Madhḥij tribe of Jurash. Yaʿūq was worshipped by the Khaywān tribe in the figure of a horse. Nasr was a deity worshipped by the Ḥimyar tribe in the form of an eagle, which the name signifies.<sup>143</sup>

Two deities, Isāf (male) and Nāʾilah (female) were worshipped as a couple. Their images were placed in the proximity of Kaʿbah and were worshipped by the Khuzāʿah and Quraysh tribes. The legend surrounding this couple states that they were

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<sup>137</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., p. 17.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-14.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., p. 9; Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 36.

<sup>142</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., pp. 8-9; Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 36.

<sup>143</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., pp. 9-10; Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 36.

originally two people from the Jurhum tribe in Yemen who fornicated in the Kaʿbah and as a result were turned to stone.<sup>144</sup> Besides these idols, the Arabs also worshipped a great number of others. There were about 360 idols, equalling in number the days of their year, in and about the Kaʿbah. On the inside wall of the Kaʿbah were the carved images of angels, Abraham, Mary and Jesus.<sup>145</sup> Among the great number of the idols, Hubal was the important one. Hubal was brought from Syria by ʿAmr b. Luḥayy. He was described as a carnelian red statue with a broken arm, a limb that the Quraysh tribe repaired in gold. In front of it were seven arrows which the Arabs used in divination.<sup>146</sup> The statue was placed in the Kaʿbah and was worshipped as a god by the Arabs of the Ḥijāz, especially by the Quraysh. The legend surrounding Hubal showed him as a god of rain and a warrior god. It was this idol who was invoked by Abū Sufyān, a leader of the Quraysh, during the battle of Uḥud.<sup>147</sup> Apart from the tribal idols, every housekeeper had his household god or goddess, which he worshipped before leaving his home and first saluted upon returning.

Regarding the matter of how the heathen Arabs performed their worship of idols, or their cultic practices, it is not known whether specific rituals were prescribed or not, and information regarding this matter is very limited. The most common cultic practice was offering. The worshippers offered a few valuables in recognition of the deity's care and support. The offering could include a portion of the harvest, money, jewellery or gold and other things. Thus, for instance, Ibn Hishām stated that money, jewellery, gold and onyx were found in the sanctuary of Allāt upon its destruction in Islamic times,<sup>148</sup> while al-Azraqī noted that the people of the lower part of Makkah, who had Dhū al-Khalaṣah, used to put necklaces on it, and bring gifts of barley and

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<sup>144</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., p. 8; Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 37.

<sup>145</sup> Muḥammad b. ʿAbd Allah al-Azraqī, *Akḥbār Makkah* (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, 1969), vol. 1, p. 163.

<sup>146</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., p. 23.

<sup>147</sup>Ibid., p. 24.

<sup>148</sup>Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 78.



wheat to it. They poured milk on it, sacrificed to it and hung ostrich eggs on it.<sup>149</sup> Several accounts also mention that worshippers gave money or camels to the keeper (*sādin*) of the Kaʿbah when consulting Hubal for a certain prophecy. It was customary to set apart a portion of their livestock and the products of their land to their deities. For the Khawlān, who had an idol called ʿAmmanas,<sup>150</sup> they used to divide their crops and animals between their idols and God,<sup>151</sup> as stated in the Qurʾān (6: 136). However they were not fair in the division as they gave priority to their idols: if any of God’s portion which they had earmarked for him came into their idols’ portion they would leave it to them; but if any of their idols’ portion was in God’s portion, they would return it to their idols. This practice was denounced by the Qurʾān itself (6: 136). According to the Qurʾān commentators, the act of setting apart of animals and crops itself was not reasonable, for God is the Creator and Owner of everything, and He has no partner, and so He does not need anything from His creatures.<sup>152</sup>

Animal sacrifice, especially of sheep and camels, was the most common practice. In fact, the Arabs used to sacrifice their animals to God or to their idols either in fulfilment of a vow or as an expression of gratitude to the deities for the increase of their animals. Ibn al-Kalbī recounted that the Prophet Muḥammad said that in pre-Islamic times when he used to follow the religion of his people, he made an offering of a white sheep to al-ʿUzzā.<sup>153</sup> Another passage from Ibn al-Kalbī implies that the flesh of sacrificial animals was divided among the worshippers present at the ceremony.<sup>154</sup> The animals which they offered and slaughtered before the idols were called ʿatāʾir (sing. ʿatīrah) (sacrifices), and the place where those animals were

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<sup>149</sup>Al-Azraqī, *Akḥbār Makkah*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 73.

<sup>150</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., pp. 37-38; Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., pp. 36-37.

<sup>151</sup>The commentary of Jalālayn suggests that God’s portion went to the guests and the needy, whereas that for the pagan deities went to the *sadanah*, the person in charge of the shrine. See Jalāl al-Dīn al-Maḥallī and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), chapter 6: 136, p. 192.

<sup>152</sup>Al-Ṭabarī, *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*, op.cit., vol. 12, p. 132; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 288.

<sup>153</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>154</sup>Ibid., p. 18.



slaughtered was called *‘itr*<sup>155</sup> (altar) or *ghabghab*.<sup>156</sup> Apart from the sacrifice, there had been a practice of setting their animals at liberty which was also regarded as offering to their idols. Of these consecrated animals there were various sorts, each denoted by different terms, namely the afore-mentioned *baḥīrah*, *sā’ibah*, *waṣīlah* and *ḥām*.<sup>157</sup> Those animals were not to be used for any purpose except for needy travellers who alone were allowed to drink their milk. The animals were pastured in areas sacred to their deities, and generally were held inviolable. This practice, which was believed to have been invented by ‘Amr b. Luḥayy of the Khuza‘ah, the same man who first introduced idolatry into Arabia, was later denounced by Islam. The heathen Arabs assumed that this practice was a part of God’s teachings, but the Qur’ān (Q. 5: 103) asserts that it was their own innovated superstition.

The sacrifice of humans did not exist, and was even prevented. Ibn Ishāq recounts that once ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib was about to sacrifice his son ‘Abd Allāh to God at the Ka‘bah in accomplishing his vow,<sup>158</sup> but the Quraysh prevented him from doing so for fear that people would follow his practice and never stop bringing their sons to sacrifice them, thereby becoming a threat to human kind. Finally, after treating with divination on numerous occasions, he substituted ‘Abd Allāh by a hundred camels which then were duly slaughtered and left there, and no man or wild beast was kept back from eating them.<sup>159</sup> It is reasonable to say that ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib, in making a vow to sacrifice one of his ten sons, was following in the tradition of Abraham who was

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<sup>155</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

<sup>156</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 38; Ibn al-Kalbī, *The Book of Idols*, op.cit., p. 18.

<sup>157</sup>See footnote no.131. For further details, see for example, Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīm*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 172-175.

<sup>158</sup>When ‘Abd al-Muṭṭalib encountered the opposition of Quraysh in digging the well of Zamzam, he vowed that if he had ten sons to grow up and protect him, he would sacrifice one of them to God at the Ka‘bah. After casting the arrows, the custom they used for divination, the arrow fell against ‘Abd Allāh, his youngest son and the one he loved most. Presuming that this was God’s decision (he was continuously praying to God whenever the custodian of the arrows cast the arrows), he took ‘Abd Allāh, went up to Isāf and Nāilah, the two idols near the Ka‘ba where Quraysh used to slaughter their sacrifices, took a large knife and nearly sacrificed him before the Quraysh stopped him. See Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 67.

<sup>159</sup>Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrah Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 66-68; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 497- 499.

commanded by God to sacrifice his son Ishmael<sup>160</sup> (Q. 37: 102). Presumably, he assumed his sacrifice would be an ultimate sacrifice, as a symbol of his praise, love and obedience to God, for his sons were the most dear to him, even if Abraham did not really sacrifice his son. Furthermore no one could betray his own vow made in the name of God or the idols, a common value among them. The Qur'ān (6: 137, 140; 81: 8-9) also notes the practice of *wa'd al-banāt* (the burial alive of infant daughters) at this time, but this should not be viewed as a form of human sacrifice, since the real motive of this act as noted in the Qur'ān was fear of poverty (6: 151; 17: 31).

Among the devotional practices of the idols were some practices which were believed to be derived from the traditions of Abraham and Ishmael, such as the veneration of the Ka'bah and its circumambulation, performing of the great and lesser pilgrimage, the vigil on 'Arafah and Muzdalifah, and raising the voice in the acclamation of the name of God (*ihlāl*) during the pilgrimage, and others,<sup>161</sup> but they introduced elements not belonging to them. Thus, for example, whenever Nizār, Kinānah and Quraysh raised their voice in the *ihlāl*, they were accustomed to say: "At Thy service, O God, at Thy service! At Thy service, Thou without an associate but the associate Thou hast. Thou ownest him and what he owns."<sup>162</sup> They used to acknowledge his unity in their cry, but at the same time associated their gods with Him, placing their affairs in His hands. In this case the Qur'ān mentions, "And most of them do not believe in God without associating others with Him" (Q. 12: 106). In other words, they do not acknowledge His unity through the knowledge of His rightful

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<sup>160</sup>Or Isaac, according to Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn Ma'sūd and some others. See for example, Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 157-160; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 158-163.

<sup>161</sup>According to some western scholars, such ceremonies, as Muir expressed, "have no conceivable connection with Abraham or with the ideas which his descendants would be likely to inherit from him, but were originated in causes foreign to the country chiefly occupied by the children of Abraham; they were strictly local; or, in so far as based on the idolatry prevailing in the south, were imported by immigrants from the Yemen." See William Muir, *The Life of Moḥammad* (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1912), p. cii. However, in the Islamic point of view, such ceremonies were definitely derived from Abraham himself, based on the Qur'ān (2: 128) and many traditions as recorded by many scholars. Those traditions, as narrated by al-Ṭabarī (and others), mention that the ceremonies (*manāṣik*) were taught to Abraham by Gabriel after completing the building of Ka'bah. See for example, al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 156-158; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Ibn Kathīr*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 283-284.

<sup>162</sup>Ar. *Labbayka Allāhumma labbayk, labbayka lā sharīka lak, illā sharīkun huwa lak, tamlikuhu wa mā malak*. See Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-Aṣṇām*, op.cit., p. 5; Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 36.

dues, but they associate with Him some of his own creatures.

According to one tradition, the heathen Arabs, except the Quraysh and their descendants (who were called al-Ḥums), used to circumambulate the Ka'bah in a state of nudity.<sup>163</sup> The reason for that might be they were obliged to perform the circumambulation by wearing a particular cloth as they should not appear before God in their ordinary garb. Ibn Ishāq recounts that the pilgrims were not allowed to go around except in the garments of the Ḥums, the rule introduced by the Quraysh.<sup>164</sup> Hence, if anyone had not the means of getting such a cloth,<sup>165</sup> he was obliged to perform the ceremony in a state of nudity. However, if they felt scruples when they had no Ḥums garments, they could go around in their ordinary clothes, but they had to throw them away afterwards so that neither they nor anyone else could make use of them.<sup>166</sup> This practice was abolished by Islam after the conquest of Makkah<sup>167</sup> by Q. 7: 31-32. Al-Dhahabī also reports that in doing circumambulation of the Ka'bah, they also used to touch either the idol of Isāf or Nā'ilah, a practice they mixed with their worship of God.

Besides worshipping God in the manner they had modified, the heathen Arabs worshipped their idols by imitating the manner they worshipped God. Several accounts recount that the heathen Arabs worshipped their idols by some practices such as

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<sup>163</sup>Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in "Bāb al-Ḥajj," 1554; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in "Bāb al-Ḥajj," 2141. The same story is told by Ibn Ishāq, see Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., pp. 87-89.

<sup>164</sup>According to Ibn Ishāq, the Quraysh who were the guardians of the holy land had introduced many innovations to distinguish them, the people of the sanctuary, from the others and because of their arrogance and pride. Therefore they gave up the halt (*wuqūf*) at 'Arafah (otherwise they did it at Muzdalifah, according to al-Dhahabī, see al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām*, op.cit., bk. 1, p. 79) even though they recognized it was of the institutions of the pilgrimage and of the religion of Abraham; they would eat cheese made of sour milk or clarify butter while they were in the state of taboo; they would refuse to allow those outside the *ḥaram* to bring food in with them when they came on the great or little pilgrimage; they could not circumambulate the house except in the garments of the ḥums; and others. See Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 87.

<sup>165</sup>A tradition narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim notes that the Quraysh used to give clothes to those who wanted to perform the circumambulation, and those who had not been given such cloth would circumambulate in nudity.

<sup>166</sup>The Arabs called these clothes *al-laqā* (the cast-off), see Ibn Ishāq, *Sīrat Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 88.

<sup>167</sup>See the traditions narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī, Abū Dāwūd, Aḥmad and al-Dārimī, in "Bāb al-Ḥajj."

showing aggrandizement (*taʿẓīm*) to them, practising veneration (*ʿtikāf*),<sup>168</sup> offering sacrifices, shaving their hair, prostrating before them, and circumambulating around them in the same way they circumambulated the Kaʿbah, although they called this circumambulating circumrotation (*dawār*).<sup>169</sup> They used to pray to their idols as well as pray to God. ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib, for example, in accomplishing his vow to sacrifice one of his sons, dealt with Hubal’s divination before praying to God. The Qur’ān states that they prayed to God only in certain circumstances, especially when they were in great danger, but turned back to their deities after God saved them (Q: 30: 33; 39: 8; 29: 65). Their worship to God, in fact, was obscured by idolatrous worship, even if they loved the idols as they loved God (2: 165). Their love of idols was somewhat clear. Whenever one purposed to set out on a journey, his last act before leaving the house would be to touch the idol in the hope of an auspicious journey; and on his return, the first thing he would do was to touch it again in gratitude for a propitious return.<sup>170</sup> During the journey he would bring with him four stones: three as supports for his cooking pot, and one as his god.<sup>171</sup> Showing love for the idols, they were accustomed to name their babies after the idols’ name. Feeling love for the idol, Abū Uḡayḡah (Saʿīd b. al-ʿĀṣ b. Umayyah), for example, wept upon his death fearing that al-ʿUzzā would not be worshipped after his death.<sup>172</sup>

However, there were some good and charitable deeds which were believed to be done for the sake of God, such as fasting and charity. It was reported that the Quraysh used to fast on the day of ʿĀshūrā’ during the Jāhiliyyah period and this

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<sup>168</sup>For example, al-Dhahabī narrated on the authority of Ibn ʿAbbās that the Quraysh used to venerate Buwānah, one of their idols, for a day and night in a year. See al-Dhahabī, *Tārikh al-Islām*, op.cit., bk. 1, p. 80.

<sup>169</sup> Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, op.cit., pp. 28, 36.

<sup>170</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>171</sup>Al-Dārimī, *Sunan*, in “Kitāb al-Muqaddimah,” 3.

<sup>172</sup>Ibn al-Kalbī, *Kitāb al-Aṣnām*, op.cit., p. 20



practice was resumed by Islam until it was replaced by the fasting of Ramaḍān.<sup>173</sup> The Arabs also used to practice charity such as feeding the needy, giving their camels for charitable purposes, freeing slaves, honouring guests and treating their neighbours well, the good practices they called *taḥannuth*.<sup>174</sup> According to the Qur'ān, these good deeds were useless, as ashes on which the wind blows furiously on a tempestuous day (14: 18), and in the Hereafter such deeds would be as floating dust scattered about (25: 23). However, they would get the reward for such deeds if they became Muslim after the advent of Islam.<sup>175</sup>

## The Islamic System of *ʿibādah*

As the main purpose of the creation of mankind, *ʿibādah* has its own system and method established in Islam as the right approach of man to God. The Prophet eradicated various erroneous forms of worship in the period of Jāhiliyyah and taught the manner of worshipping God.<sup>176</sup> Throughout the twenty-three years of his prophethood, the Prophet Muḥammad, inspired by God, instituted a specific practical system of *ʿibādah* which constitutes an important part of the basic Islamic system as

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<sup>173</sup>Tradition reported by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dāwūd, Mālik and al-Dārimī. See for example, al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in "Kitāb al-Ṣawm," 1760; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1898 and 1900.

<sup>174</sup>Tradition reported by al-Bukhārī, Muslim and Aḥmad. See for example, al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in "Kitāb al-ʾImān," 1346, 2068, 2353, 5533; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in "Kitāb ʾImān," 175, 176, 177.

<sup>175</sup>Al-Bukhārī, *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in "Kitāb al-ʾImān," 1346,

<sup>176</sup>There were some *ʿibādāt* in the period of Jāhiliyyah that were retained, corrected and modified by Islam, such as fasting, pilgrimage, sacrifice and others. It is known that the teachings of Islam preached by the Prophet Muḥammad which denounced the varied false worships in the pre-Islamic period that were based on polytheism, especially the idolatrous ones, did not totally reject all the Jāhiliyyah's system which had been established over centuries. Islam's denunciation was only on the deviations of faith, heresies, wrongdoings and evil deeds of the Jāhiliyyah. Islam preserved the good values and virtuous principles which were compatible with its teachings, and even, adopted some of them that were considered to be Abrahamic legacies. It is noteworthy that among the objectives of the advent of Islam is to resurrect the religion of Abraham which almost vanished at the time (see Q. 3: 95; 6: 161; 16: 123). Therefore, in that case, Islam should not be viewed as adopted the Jāhiliyyah's system, but from the origin of the Jāhiliyyah's system, i.e. the traditions of Abraham. See the commentary of al-Qurṭubī on Q. 16: 123 in his *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, op.cit., vol. 10, p. 130, and the commentary of Ibn Kathīr on 6: 161 in his *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 317.

found in the Qur'ān and Sunnah.

As has been mentioned before, the system of Islam consists of two basic elements: faith (*‘aqīdah*) and canonical law (Sharī‘ah). *‘ibādah* or *‘ibādāt*, the usual word used in the treatises of jurisprudence (*fiqh*), is a sub-system of Sharī‘ah. Sharī‘ah, as expounded by scholars and jurists, can be divided into several divisions,<sup>177</sup> namely *‘ibādāt*, *mu‘āmalāt*, *munākahāt* and *jīnāyāt*. In the works on law or jurisprudence (*fiqh*), *‘ibādah* is often referred to as the ordinances of divine worship, i.e. the specific prescribed rites by which mankind expresses his creatureliness, submissiveness and obedience to God.<sup>178</sup> Some are obligatory (*fard* or *wājib*), while the others are supererogatory (*sunnah*, *mandūb* or *nāfilah*).

### ***‘ibādah*: Obligatory and Supererogatory**

There are four basic obligatory acts of *‘ibādah*, which, together with the confession of faith (*shahādah*), constitute the pillars of Islam, namely, prayers (*ṣalāh*), alms-giving (*zakaḥ*), fasting during Ramaḍān (*ṣiyām Ramaḍān*) and pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). The confession of faith is commonly dealt with in the science of *Kalām*, while the other four pillars are referred to as the fundamentals of *‘ibādah*, which are classed, together with ritual purification (*ṭahārah*) in the section of *‘ibādāt*, the first section in the writing of *fiqh* books. Although the whole system of Islam consisting of the matters of faith and Sharī‘ah is also perceived as *‘ibādāt* generally, the four pillars are the very basic *‘ibādāt* that act as the framework of the structure of Islam.

These compulsory *‘ibādāt* are the first and foremost duty after the confession of faith, which must be observed by every single person professing to be a Muslim as they are the basic means by which one manifests submissiveness, humbleness and

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<sup>177</sup>No definite division of Sharī‘ah has been classified by scholars. The formal classification is, *‘ibādāt*, *mu‘āmalāt* and *uqūbāt*. See Joseph Schacht, "Sharī‘a", in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. IV, p. 321.

<sup>178</sup>See H.A.R. Gibb, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, op.cit., p. 143; Constance E. Padwick, *Muslim Devotion* (London: S.P.C.K., second ed. 1969), p. 6.



obedience to God, and acknowledges His oneness and sovereignty. Each act of *‘ibādāt* has its own particular manner of accomplishment taught by the Prophet Muḥammad, and each has its own significance and meaning mentioned in the Qur’ān and Sunnah which should be appreciated by every Muslim.<sup>179</sup>

Apart from the obligatory *‘ibādāt*, Islam has also prescribed supererogatory *‘ibādāt* consisting of various type of prayers, fasting, charity, remembrance and supplication. The obligatory *‘ibādāt*, as depicted by al-Ghazzālī, are “the capital on which the trading activities are based and through which man comes to safety,” while the supererogatory *‘ibādāt* are “the profit which gives a man a higher degree of success.”<sup>180</sup> The Prophet Muḥammad said that God says:

“Nothing brings men nearer to Me like the performance of what I made obligatory for them; and through works of supererogation My servant comes ever nearer to Me until I love him, and when I have bestowed My love on him, I become his hearing with which he hears, his sight with which he sees, his tongue with which he speaks, his hand with which he grasps, and his foot with which he walks.”<sup>181</sup>

*‘ibādāt*, whether obligatory or supererogatory, are not limited to such rituals, but include every good deed done in obedience to and for the pleasure of God. *‘ibādāt* can be prayer, fasting, remembrance and so on, and it can be others such as good behaviour, reverence to parents, good relationship with others, trustworthiness, commanding the good and forbidding evil, jihad and etc., which the Qur’ān mentions as *‘amal ṣāliḥ*, *birr*, *khayr*, *ḥasanah* or suchlike terms:

“Whoever hopes for the meeting with his Lord, he should work righteous works (*‘amal ṣāliḥ*), and he should not associate any partner in the worship of his Lord” (19: 110).

“It is not righteousness (*al-birr*) that you turn your faces towards east or west, but righteousness is the one who believes in God, the Last Day, the Angels, the Book and the Prophets; and gives his wealth, in spite of

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<sup>179</sup>On the meanings, significance and inner dimension of these four *‘ibādāt*, see al-Ghazzālī, *Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn*, in ‘Kitāb Asrār al-Ṣalāh wa-Muhimmātu-hā,’ ‘Kitāb Asrār al-Zakāh,’ ‘Kitāb Asrār al-Ṣiyām’ and ‘Kitāb Asrār al-Ḥajj,’ op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 205-380.

<sup>180</sup>Al-Ghazzālī, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*, in W. M. Watt, *The Faith and Practice of al-Ghazzālī* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1953), p. 90.

<sup>181</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in “Kitāb al-Riqāq,” 6021.

love for it, to the kinsfolk, to the orphans, to the poor, to the wayfarer, to those who ask, and to set slaves free; and performs prayer; gives alms; and who fulfil their covenant when they make it; and who are patient in tribulation and adversity, and the time of stress. Such are the people of the truth and they are the pious (*al-muttaqūn*)” (2: 177).

“And whatever good (*khayr*) you send before you for yourselves, you will certainly find it with God, better and greater in reward” (73: 20).

“Whoever brings a good deed (*ḥasanah*) will have better than its worth, and they will be safe from the terror on that Day” (27: 89).

Such terms may have their own specific meanings, but signify and share the principal meaning of good deeds accomplished in accordance with the law of God and to seek His pleasure,<sup>182</sup> which is the meaning that is incorporated in the meaning of *‘ibādah* itself, i.e. what God loves and is pleased with.<sup>183</sup>

In the wide range of *‘ibādāt*, there are some types apart from the four pillars of Islam, which have been specially highlighted in the Sunnah. Invocation (*du‘ā*), for instance, is epitomized as the core of *‘ibādah*. The Prophet Muḥammad said: “Invocation (*al-du‘ā*) is the brain (*mukhkh*) of *‘ibādah*.”<sup>184</sup> In another *ḥadīth*, it is referred to as *‘ibādah* itself: “Indeed, invocation (*al-du‘ā*) is *‘ibādah*.”<sup>185</sup> In the relationship between Muslims, good opinion (*ḥusn al-ẓann*) is regarded as good *‘ibādah*. The Prophet said: “Good opinion is a part of good *‘ibādah*.”<sup>186</sup> Jihad, the culmination of Islam,<sup>187</sup> can be regarded as the highest *‘ibādāt* as signified in the

<sup>182</sup>See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī et.al, *al-Tafsīr al-Wajīz wa Muḥjam Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān al-‘Azīz* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), p. 37, 102, 141, 386; *Muḥjam Gharīb al-Qur’ān*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 1.

<sup>183</sup>Mawdudī, *al-Muṣṭalahāt al-Arba‘ah*, op.cit., p. 34.

<sup>184</sup>See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in ‘Kitāb al-Da‘awāt,’ 3293

<sup>185</sup>After saying so, the Prophet recites: “And your Lord said, ‘Invoke Me, I will respond for you. Those who scorn my worship they will surely enter Hell in humiliation’” (Q. 40: 60). See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in ‘Kitāb Tafsīr al-Qur’ān,’ 2895; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in ‘Kitāb al-Du‘ā,’ 3818; *al-Musnad*, in ‘Musnad al-Kūfiyīn,’ 18629. Waiting for God’s response is also regarded the best *‘ibādah* as indicated in the other *ḥadīth*: “Ask from God His bounty. Indeed, God loves to be asked. The best *‘ibādah* is waiting for the repose (*intīẓār al-faraj*). See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in ‘Kitāb al-Da‘awāt,’ 3494.

<sup>186</sup>See *Sunan Abi Dāwūd*, in ‘Kitāb al-Adab,’ 4341; *al-Musnad*, in ‘Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn,’ 7615, 7693, 8912, 9969.

<sup>187</sup>Based on the *ḥadīth*: “The ‘head’ (*ra’s*) of business (*al-amr*) is Islam, its pillars is Prayer (*ṣalāh*), and its culmination (*dhirwat sanāmihi*) is jihad.” See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in ‘Kitāb al-Imān,’ 2541; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in ‘Kitāb al-Fitan,’ 3963; *al-Musnad*, in ‘Musnad al-Anṣār,’ 21008, 21036, 21054 & 21106.

ḥadīth: "One's position in the row (*ṣaff*) in the way of God (jihad) is better than sixty years of *ʿibādah*."<sup>188</sup> Jihad is also considered as the best action after faith (*īmān*). The Prophet was asked about the best action (*ʿamal*), and he answered: "Belief (*īmān*) in God and His Messenger." He was asked again: "What is next?" The Prophet answered: "Jihad in the way of God."<sup>189</sup> These particular *ʿibādāt* could be perceived, perhaps, as the supporters of the structure of Islam in maintaining the relationship with God, perpetuating the relationship with human beings, and preserving the teachings of Islam.

### ***ʿibādah* in the System of Islam**

Sometimes, the scholars tend to regard the whole system of Islam or *dīn* as *ʿibādah*,<sup>190</sup> as signified by their respective meaning, i.e. submissiveness (*khuḍūʿ*) and humbleness (*tadhallul*),<sup>191</sup> which is also meant by *ʿibādah*. The natural result of the submissiveness and humbleness is that all one's activities should conform to the instructions of the One to whom one is submitting, i.e. God. Besides, the meaning of *ʿibādah* also demands the obedience to all of God's law, i.e. to follow at every step in one's life, the law laid down by God and reject all other laws conflicting with His law. By doing so his entire life will transform into a life of *ʿibādah*, and in such a life every single action, including what are usually considered secular or worldly actions will become *ʿibādah*, provided that they are done in the limits set by God of permissible and

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<sup>188</sup>See *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in 'Kitāb al-Jihād,' 2289.

<sup>189</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in 'Kitāb al-Īmān,' 25; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in 'Kitāb al-Īmān,' 118, *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in 'Kitāb Faḍl al-Jihād,' 1082; *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, in 'Kitāb al-Jihād,' 3089; *al-Musnad*, in 'Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn,' 7189; *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in 'Kitāb al-Jihād,' 2286.

<sup>190</sup>See for example, Ibn Taymiyyah, *Risālat al-ʿUbūdiyyah*, op.cit., p. 73; Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, op.cit., pp.128-130; al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-ʿibādah fī al-Islām*, op.cit., pp. 49-54.

<sup>191</sup>'Islam' comes from the word *aslama* which means to submit, while *dīn* is derived from the word *dāna* that means to humble. See E. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op.cit., bk. 1, pt. III, p. 938. In the Islamic literature, Islam and *dīn* are used interchangeably to mean the corpus of obligatory prescriptions given by God, to which one must submit. See the articles "Islam" and "Dīn" in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. II, p. 293, vol. IV, p. 171.

forbidden things.<sup>192</sup>

Many traditions mention that certain deeds will be rewarded, implying that they are part of *‘ibādah*. For instance, decent work is considered in Islam a type of *‘ibādah*. The Prophet Muḥammad said: "Whoever finds himself at nightfall tired from his work, God will forgive his sins."<sup>193</sup> Seeking knowledge is regarded as one of the highest types of *‘ibādah*. The Prophet Muḥammad said: "Seeking knowledge is obligatory (*farīḍah*) for every Muslim."<sup>194</sup> In another saying he said: "Seeking knowledge for one hour is better than praying for seventy years."<sup>195</sup> Social courtesy and cooperation are part of *‘ibādah* when done for the sake of God as the Prophet told: "Receiving your friend with a smile is a type of charity, helping a person to load his animal is a charity and putting some water in your neighbour's bucket is a charity."<sup>196</sup> It is worth noting that even performing one's duty is considered a sort of worship. The Prophet Muḥammad said that whatever one spends for his family is a type of charity, and he will be rewarded if he acquires it through legal means.<sup>197</sup> In fact, according to the Prophet, having sexual intercourse with a legal partner is also regarded as *‘ibādah*. The Companions asked the Prophet: "How are we going to be rewarded for doing something we enjoy very much?" The Prophet asked them: "Suppose you satisfy your desires illegally; don't you think that you will be punished for that?" They replied: "Yes." He said: "So, by satisfying it legally with your wives you are rewarded for it."<sup>198</sup> The concept of *‘ibādah* in Islam is comprehensive, which includes all the good deeds of an individual. This of course is in agreement with the all inclusive nature of Islam as a way of life which regulates human life at all levels:

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<sup>192</sup>See for example, Mawdudī, *al-Muṣṭalaḥāt al-Arbā‘ah*, op.cit., p. 40; al-Qaradāwī, *al-‘ibādah fī al-Islām*, op.cit., pp. 53-55.

<sup>193</sup>Narrated by al-Bayhaqī, see *Sunan al-Kubrā*, in "Kitāb al-‘Ilm", 233.

<sup>194</sup>See *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah" 220; *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah" 220.

<sup>195</sup>As narrated in *Iḥyā’*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 15.

<sup>196</sup>See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, in "Kitāb al-Birr wa al-Ṣilah" 1879.

<sup>197</sup>Narrated by al-Ṭabrānī, as quoted by al-Qaradāwī in *al-‘ibādah*, op.cit., p. 64.

<sup>198</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in "Kitāb al-Zakāh," 1674; *al-Musnad* in "Musnad al-Anṣār," 20500.

individual, social, economic, political and spiritual.

This is the utmost objective of Islamic teachings, i.e. to call human beings to the total worship of God, which is symbolized in the declaration of faith, '*Lā ilāha illa Allāh*' - 'There is no god but God.' The Qur'ān says:

"Say, my prayer, my sacrifice, my life and my death are for the Lord of worlds. He has no associate. I have been commanded this, and I am the foremost to be among the submitters" (6: 162 - 163).

"The command (*al-ḥukm*) belongs to God alone. He commands you not to worship anyone except Him. This is the right way of life." (12: 40).

The practical interpretation of the declaration of faith, according to the scholars, is the foundation of a Muslim community. Thus, the declaration of faith provides the foundation for a complete system of life in all its detail. To quote Sayyid Quṭb:<sup>199</sup>

"If the system of life is constructed on some other foundation, or if other sources are mixed with this foundation, then that community cannot be considered Islamic.... The distinctive feature of a Muslim community is: that in all its affairs, it is based on worship (*ʿubudiyyah*) of God alone. The declaration of faith expresses this principle and determines its character: in beliefs, in devotional acts (*ṭaʿabbudiyyah*), and in rules and regulations, this declaration takes a concrete form.... anyone who derives laws from a source other than God, in a way other than what He taught us through the Prophet, does not worship God alone.... In this society, the beliefs and ideas of individuals, their religious observances and *ʿibādāt*, their social system and laws, are all based on the submission to God alone. If this attitude is eliminated from any of these aspects, the whole of Islam is eliminated, as the first pillar of Islam is eliminated.... "

Hence, *ʿibādah* does not mean merely to worship God in the form of rituals, but it means to worship God in all realms of life by following His law, i.e. the whole system of Islam. Islam, being a way of life, requires that its followers model their life according to its teachings in every aspect, religious or otherwise. Worshipping God in rituals without obeying the rest of His law, according to the scholars, would be polytheism (*shirk*) in His worship.<sup>200</sup> The Qur'ān states:

"It is not for a believer, man or woman, when God and His Messenger have

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<sup>199</sup>Sayyid Quṭb, *Maʿālim fī al-Ṭarīq* (Cairo: Dār al-Shurūq, 1983), pp. 92-95.

<sup>200</sup>Ibid., p. 94; al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-ʿIbādah fī al-Islām*, op.cit., p. 54,

decreed a matter, that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys God and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a clear error" (33: 36).

"Are there associates of God who have made permissible for them in their religion that which God has permitted?" (42: 21).

## The Simple Classification of *‘ibādah*

Inasmuch as the realm of *‘ibādah* in Islam is large, scholars tend to classify it into several sub-categories. In traditional Islamic treatises, the classification of *‘ibādah* is found more in the *fiqh* books, which normally commence with the section of purity (*bāb al-ṭahārah*), followed by the section of *‘ibādāt* comprising the four main compulsory rituals, namely prayers, fasting, alms, and pilgrimage. In connection with these rituals, the supererogatory *‘ibādāt* relating to them such as voluntary prayers, funerals (*janā'iz*), voluntary fasting and others, are also discussed. They are also accompanied by other supererogatory *‘ibādāt* such as spiritual retreat (*al-ṭikāf*), reciting the Qur'ān, supplication and remembrance, ritual slaughter (*al-dhabā'ih*), vows (*al-nudhūr*) and oaths (*al-aymān*). Jihad, sometimes, is also included in the section of *‘ibādāt*.<sup>201</sup>

In modern Islamic literature, in addition to the established traditional *fiqh*'s classification, *‘ibādāt* is classified into several divisions. The most common classification is based on its rules (*ḥukm*). There are three categories based on this method of classification. The categories are: (i) obligatory; (ii) supererogatory; (iii) collective duty (*farḍ kifāyah*). The obligatory *‘ibādāt* consists of the four pillars of Islam; while the supererogatory *‘ibādāt* are many such as invocation, remembrance, charity, trustworthiness, fulfilling promises and all good deeds. The collective duty type of *‘ibādāt* includes funerals (*tajhīz al-maiyit*) and jihad.<sup>202</sup>

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<sup>201</sup>Gibb and Kramer, *The Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, in the article "‘Ibādāt," op.cit., p. 143; Bousquet, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, in the article "‘Ibādāt," op.cit., vol. 3, p. 647.

<sup>202</sup>See for example, Muḥammad al-Mubārak, *Niẓām al-Islām: al-‘aḳḳdah wa al-‘ibādah* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1973), p. 360.



Another classification is based on its physical form. In this classification, *‘ibādāt* is divided into two categories, viz. (i) external *‘ibādāt* (*‘ibādāt ṣāḥiriyyah*), which are oral or practical, or abstentional, such as recitation of the Qur’ān, invocation, prayers and fasting, and; (ii) internal *‘ibādāt* (*‘ibādāt baṭiniyyah*) which find its place in one’s heart such as faith, love to God, trust in God (*tawakkul*) and fear (*khawf*) of Him.<sup>203</sup>

A further classification is made concerning the relationship with God and the relationship with human beings. *‘ibādāt* concerning the relationship with God are known as private *‘ibādāt* (*‘ibādāt khuṣuṣiyyah*), such as the four pillars of Islam, invocation, remembrance and repentance (*tawbah*); whilst *‘ibādāt* concerning the relationship with humans are known as general *‘ibādāt* (*‘ibādāt ‘umūmiyyah*), which pertain to the matters of politics, law, economics, society, education, jihad and etc.<sup>204</sup>

There are some other classifications made by scholars using different terminologies. However, whatever the classification may be, the concerns are the same. Though this discussion is to give a clear picture of the general concept of *‘ibādāt* in Islamic perspectives, in the next discussion this study will particularly highlight on specific ritual acts of worship, including the obligatory and supererogatory ones, which have been the subject of debate between the reformists and the traditionalists in Malaysia.

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<sup>203</sup>See for example, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Miftāḥ Dār al-Sā‘ādah* (Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Riyāḍ al-Ḥadīthah, n. d.), vol. 1, p. 293; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, *Majmū‘at al-Tawḥīd*, op.cit., pp. 235-236; T.M. Hasbi Ashshiddieqy, *Kuliah Ibadah* (Batu Caves, [Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia]): Thinkers Library, 1994), pp. 15-18.

<sup>204</sup>See Muḥammad al-Mubārak, *Niẓām al-Islām*, op.cit., p. 364.

## CHAPTER FOUR

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### THE CONFLICT: THE TRADITIONALISTS' AND REFORMISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF 'IBĀDAH

#### Perceptions Regarding the *Shahādah* (Profession of Faith)

As the first pillar of Islam, the traditionalists and the reformists regard the *shahādah* - *Lā ilāha illa-Allāh, Muḥammad-ur-Rasūl-Allāh* - "There is no god but God and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God" - as a matter of the uttermost importance for a Muslim. It is also the basis that differentiates a Muslim from non-Muslim. However, their approaches to the *shahādah* are somewhat different. According to the traditionalists, every human being who has a sound mind (ʿāqil) and is mature (*bāligh*) is obliged to be a Muslim by uttering the *shahādah*; and one who is already a Muslim must utter the *shahādah* at least five times a day, i.e. in the last salutation to God (*al-taḥiyyah al-akhīrah*) of the five obligatory prayers.<sup>1</sup> To utter the *shahādah* one must "know, be convinced of, believe and testify"<sup>2</sup> two things: that there is no other god to be worshipped but God; and Muḥammad is the Messenger of God. To appreciate the former, one should firstly know God through His perfect attributes, especially the 'Twenty Attributes' (*sifat dua puluh*) of God<sup>3</sup> as taught in the *Umm al-Barāhīn* of al-

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<sup>1</sup>Daud Fatani, *Sullam al-Mubtadī fī Maʿrifat Ṭarīqat al-Muhtadī* (Pulau Pinang: Percetakan al-Māʾārif, no date), pp. 2-3.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>The 'Twenty Attributes of God' are classified into four categories, namely: 1. *Ṣifāt Nafsiyyah* (Obligatory Attribute for the Essence of God) which consists of one attribute i.e. *Wujūd* (Existence); 2. *Ṣifāt Salbiyyah* (Attributes that deny undesired qualities for His Essence) which comprises five attributes, namely: *Qidam* (Sempiternity - Infinite Pre-Existence), *Baqāʾ* (Everlasting), *Mukhālafatuh-u li-al-ḥawādith* (Different from created things), *Qiyāmuh-u bi-nafsih* (Self-Existence - Independence), *Waḥdāniyyah* (Oneness); 3. *Ṣifāt Maʿānī* (The Attributes that exist in the Existence of God), which consists of seven attributes, namely: *Qudrah* (Omnipotence), *Irādah* (Will), *ʿIlm* (Knowledge), *Ḥayāh* (Life), *Samāʾ* (Listening), *Baṣar* (Sight) and *Kalām* (Speaking); 4. *Ṣifāt Maʿnawiyah* (The Confirmed Attributes of the God's) which also consists seven attributes: *Qādir* (Omnipotent), *Murīd* (Having Will), *ʿĀlim* (Having

(continued...)

Sanūsī; and to appreciate the latter, one should know the 'three qualities' of the Messenger of God<sup>4</sup> as taught also by al-Sanūsī's *Umm al-Barāhīn*.<sup>5</sup> The traditionalists believe that the doctrine of Twenty Attributes of God and Three Qualities of God's Messenger are the basis and prerequisite of the *shahādah*.<sup>6</sup>

For the traditionalists, the meaning of the first part of *shahādah* - *Lā ilāh-a illa-Allāh* (There is no god but God) - is understood as follows: The meaning of *ulūhiyyah* is the independence (*istighnā'*) of God from others and the dependence (*iftiqār*) of others to God. Therefore, *Lā ilāh-a illa-Allāh* means *Lā mustaghniy-a<sup>c</sup> an kulli mā siwāh wa muftaqirun ilayh kullu mā<sup>c</sup> adāh illa-Allāh* - that there is no one who is independent from the others, and is depended on by the others except God.<sup>7</sup> The phrase *Lā ilāh-a illa-Allāh* consists of two elements: denial (*naḥy*) and confirmation (*ithbāt*), i.e. denying everything from being god (*ilāh*); and confirming only God is god (*ilāh*).<sup>8</sup> This phrase also manifests the reality (*ḥaqīqah*) of God, which can be described by these phrases: *Laysa mustahiqq li-al-<sup>c</sup>ibādah ghayru Allāh* (There is no one who is worthy to be worshipped except God); *Laysa ma<sup>c</sup>būd bi-ḥaqq ghayr Allāh* (There is no one who is really worshipped except God); *Laysa wājib al-wujūd al-mustahiqq li-al-<sup>c</sup>ibādah ghayr Allāh* (There is no one who obligatorily exists who is

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<sup>3</sup>(...continued)

Knowledge), *Ḥayy* (Alive), *Samī* (Having Listening), *Baṣīr* (Having Discernment) and *Mutakallim* (Speaker). See for example, Muhammad Zain b. Faqih Jalaluddin Ashi, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah Sharḥ Matn Umm al-Barāhīn* (Pulau Pinang: Percetakan al-Ma'ārif, no date), pp. 6-14; Ismail b. Abdul Mutalib Ashi, *Hidāyat al-<sup>c</sup>Awām* (Pulau Pinang: Dār al-Ma'ārif, no date) pp. 4-5; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭlā' al-Badrayn wa Majma' al-Baḥrayn* (Bangkok: Maktabah al-Nahdī, no date), pp. 5-8.

<sup>4</sup>Three basic qualities of the God's Messenger are *Ṣidq* (Truthfulness), *Amānah* (Trustworthiness) and *Tablīgh* (Conveyance). See Muhammad Zain Ashi, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*, op.cit., p. 22-28; Ismail Ashi, *Hidāyat al-<sup>c</sup>Awām*, op.cit., p. 5; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭlā' al-Badrayn*, op.cit., pp. 8-9. In some books there is one more basic quality i.e. *Faṭānah* (Smartness). See Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Wishāh al-Afrāḥ wa Iṣbāḥ al-Falāḥ* (Pulau Pinang: Percetakan al-Ma'ārif, no date), p. 4; Utsman b. Abdullah b. Aqil b. Yahya, *Awwaluddin Sifat Dua Puluh* (Jakarta: M. A. Jaya, 1324H), p. 40.

<sup>5</sup>As elaborated by Daud Fatani regarding the *Shahādah*. See *Sullam al-Mubtadī*, op.cit., p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>Muhammad Zain Ashi, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*, op.cit., p. 28; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭlā' al-Badrayn*, op.cit., p. 9.

<sup>7</sup>Muhammad Zain Ashi, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*, op.cit., p. 28; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭlā' al-Badrayn*, op.cit., p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Muhammad Zain Ashi, *Bidāyat al-Hidāyah*, op.cit., p. 30.

worthy to be worshipped except God). All these meanings, according to the traditionalists, should be present in one's heart when uttering the *shahādah*.<sup>9</sup>

To simplify the matter, the traditionalists have lined up four pillars (*arkān*) for the *shahādah*, namely:<sup>10</sup> 1. To confirm (*ithbāt*) the essence (*dhāt*) of God; 2. To confirm the attributes (*ṣifāt*) of God; 3. To confirm the actions (*aʿfāl*) of God; 4. To confirm the truth of the Messenger of God.<sup>11</sup>

The reformists, however, are apparently not in favour of the traditionalists' approach which emphasizes the doctrine of the Twenty Attributes of God in the *shahādah*. The reformists disagree with the method of teaching of the doctrine which they claim is confusing, bothering and fails to build a strong faith in the Muslim community.<sup>12</sup> To relate the *shahādah* only with the understanding of the Twenty Attributes of God and the Three Qualities of the Messenger is unwise as the *shahādah* has a wide meaning which comprehends the meaning of Islam and *īmān*. The *shahādah*, according to the reformists, is the 'Word of Islam' (*Kalimat al-Islām*) by which one is not considered a Muslim until he knows its meanings, agrees with it, and obeys to do what is obliged to him. It is also the 'Word of Sincerity' (*Kalimat al-Ikhlāṣ*) that denies polytheism (*shirk*); and the 'Word of Devoutness' (*Kalimat al-Taqwā*) which saves the speaker from polytheism.<sup>13</sup>

The reformists' approach in appreciating the *shahādah* is similar to the teachings of Ibn Taymiyyah and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb which are, as they claim, based on the Qur'ān, the Sunnah and the way pioneered by the Salaf al-Ṣāliḥīn

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 28, 30.

<sup>10</sup>Ismail b. Abdul Mutalib Ashi, *Hidāyat al-ʿAwām*, op.cit., p. 4.

<sup>11</sup>This four pillars are usually counted alongside the pillars of *īmān* and the pillars of Islam which altogether constitute Fifteen Pillars of Religion. See Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>See Hamka, *Prinsip dan Kebijaksanaan Dakwah Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Melayu Baru, 1982), pp. 240-241.

<sup>13</sup>See for example, leaflets published by the Persatuan al-Iṣlāḥ Perlis regarding 'Sharat-sharat *Shahādah*' no. 1-10, no date. The leaflets are published weekly, during the public lecture on every Friday morning. The content of the leaflets is referred mainly to the writings of Ibn Taymiyyah and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb. See also, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, edited by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā (Egypt: Maktabah al-Manār, 1346H), pp. 172-173.

(Pious Forefathers). This is clearly shown in the teaching of the Oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) which is classified into three types: *Tawḥīd al-Rububiyyah* (The Oneness of Lordship); *Tawḥīd al-Ulūhiyyah/al-ʿUbūdiyyah* (The Oneness of Servitude); and *Tawḥīd al-Asmā' wa al-Ṣifāt* (The Oneness of God's names and attributes). Such a teaching is known to be associated with Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and suchlike persons who are of the *salafi madhhab* as found in their writings.<sup>14</sup>

Such a teaching of *Tawḥīd* is also regarded as a prerequisite of the *shahādah* as it is a way to know God. To be more specific, the reformists have propounded seven simple conditions (*shurūṭ*) of the *shahādah*, namely: 1. Knowing the meaning (*ʿilm*) of the *shahādah* in its sense of denying and confirming (*nafy wa ithbāt*); 2. Being convinced (*yaqīn*) without any doubt of what is understood of the meaning of the *shahādah*; 3. Being sincere (*ikhhlās*) about what is professed; 4. Being honest (*ṣidq*), free from hypocrisy (*nifāq*); 5. Having love (*maḥabbah*) for the *shahādah* and what is indicated by it; 6. Obeying (*inqiyād*) the rights (*ḥuqūq*) of the *shahādah* which includes the obligatory deeds (*al-ʿmāl al-wājibah*), with sincerity and to please God; 7. Agreeing (*qabūl*) with its meaning.<sup>15</sup> Everyone who utters the *shahādah* must possess all these conditions, otherwise it will not benefit him.<sup>16</sup>

## Perceptions Regarding Matters Pertaining to Prayer (*Ṣalāh*)

### Nullity of Ablution - Touching (*Mulāmasah*)

The issue of touching (*mulāmasah*) - whether it nullifies one's ablution or not - is one

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<sup>14</sup>See Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-ʿAqā'id al-Wāsiṭiyyah* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Salafiyyah, 1398H), passim; Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, op.cit., pp. 175-177, passim.

<sup>15</sup>Persatuan al-Islāh Perlis (Leaflets), 'Sharat-sharat Shahādah,' op. cit., no. 1-10, no date; see also Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, op. cit., pp. 172-173.

<sup>16</sup>Persatuan al-Islāh Perlis (Leaflets), 'Sharat-sharat Shahādah,' op. cit., no. 1, p. 3, see also Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, *Majmūʿat al-Tawḥīd*, op. cit., p. 172.



of the questions about which there is dispute (*masā'il khilāfiyyah*) among the jurists (*fuqahā'*). In the Malaysian context, this issue has been the cause of long polemic between the firmly-established traditionalists, the exponents of the Shāfi'ite *madhhab*, and the reformists, the challengers of traditionalism.

According to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, touching (*mulāmasah*) the skin of someone of the opposite sex, whether with desire (*shahwah*) or not, purposely or otherwise, is regarded to be a cause of the nullification of one's ablution.<sup>17</sup> This is the law (*ḥukm*) that is strongly adopted by the traditional Malay Muslim scholars which also has been observed by the Malays in general. To be more specific, the law states that the ablution will be nullified by the direct contact of a man's skin to a woman's skin or vice versa, to whom he or she is not a relative (*ajnabī*) and to whom marriage is not forbidden (*ghayr al-maḥram*), notwithstanding the elderly and even the deceased.<sup>17</sup> Both parties, the toucher and the touched person are affected. However, touching whether with desire or otherwise parts such as the hair, nails or teeth does not nullify the ablution for they are different from the skin. This is similar with the case of feeling of desire without touching, which does not nullify the ablution as the desire is only in the heart, and not shown by action.<sup>18</sup>

The reason for the nullity of ablution is that the touching is identified as a

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<sup>17</sup>See Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm* (Beirut: Dār Qutaybah, 1996), vol. 1, pp. 74-76; Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab* (Cairo: Maṭba'ah al-Babī al-Ḥalabī, 1967), vol. 1, p. 24; al-Bajūrī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Bajūrī* (Egypt: Maṭba'at al-Amīriyyah, 5th ed. 1975), vol. 1, p. 71. See also, Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn* (Penang: al-Ma'ārif, no date) pp. 91-93; Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb* (Bangkok: Maktabah al-Nahdī, no date), vol. 1, pp. 35-37.

<sup>17</sup>Direct contact means without obstruction (*ḥā'il*) such as cloth. If touching is over the cloth, thick or thin, accompanied with desire or not, it does not nullify the ablution as it does not contact the skin. The term man and woman signifies male (*dhakar*) and female (*unthā*) who are mature in age (*bāligh*) and commonly have desire (*shahwah*) for the opposite sex, so that a boy's touching a girl or vice versa will not nullify the ablution for the absence of possibility of desire (*maẓinnat al-shahwah*). The term unmarriedable (*maḥram*) means a person whom one is prohibited from marrying because of lineage (*nasab*), foster relationship (*raḍā'*) or marriage relationship (*muṣāharah*). See al-Shirāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 24; al-Bajūrī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Bajūrī*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 71. See also Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, op.cit., pp. 91-93; Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 35-37; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Wishāḥ al-Afrāḥ* (Penang: al-Mā'ārif, no date), p. 14; idem, *Maṭlā' al-Badrayn* (Bangkok: Maktabah al-Nahdī, no date), p. 20.

<sup>18</sup>Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 75-76; Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, op.cit., p. 91; Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 36; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Wishāḥ al-Afrāḥ*, op.cit., p. 14.



source of sexual pleasure (*al-taladhdhudh*) that leads to desire (*al-shahwah*), a circumstance which is not worthy for those who are in a state of purity (*al-mutaṭahhirūn*).<sup>19</sup> The proof of this law is the verses of the Qur'ān (4: 43 & 5: 6) mentioning the legitimacy of *tayammum* (rubbing with clean sand or earth) instead of ablution:

"And if you are ill, or on a journey, or one of you comes from offices of nature (*al-ghā'it*), or you have been in contact with women (*lāmastum al-nisā'*), and you find no water, then perform *tayammum* with clean earth and rub therewith your faces and hands."

In the Shāfi'ī's point of view, the *mulāmasah* mentioned in the verse denotes its real lexical meaning, i.e. touching by hand (*al-jass bi-al-yad*), or kissing (*al-qublah*), or skin contact (*mulāqāt al-basharatayn*), not sexual intercourse (*jimā'*). The reading of Ḥamzah and al-Kisā'ī, "*lamastum al-nisā'*" (you touched your wives),<sup>20</sup> is a clue that strengthens this meaning, for *lams* shows a clear meaning of touching by hand.<sup>21</sup>

This law is also based on a tradition of the Companions (*athar*) narrated by Mālik<sup>22</sup> that 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar is reported to have said: "A man's kissing of his wife, and his touching with his hand, are included in "touching" (*mulāmasah*). Whoever kisses his wife or touches her with his hand, is obliged to perform ablution." 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd is also reported to have had the same opinion.<sup>23</sup>

The reformists' standpoint on this issue is seemingly in total contradiction to the traditionalists' viewpoint. They affirm the Ḥanafīs' opinion that touching does not nullify ablution<sup>24</sup> for several reasons which can be summarized as follows:

<sup>19</sup>Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, op.cit., p. 91.

<sup>20</sup>See al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi' li-Aḥkām al-Qur'ān* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Dār al-Kitāb al-Maṣriyyah, 1935), vol. 5, p. 145.

<sup>21</sup>Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 24.

<sup>22</sup>Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 3rd ed. 1969), vol. 1, p. 43

<sup>23</sup>Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 75; see also, Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa'*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 44.

<sup>24</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Ḍabādat Rasūl Allāh* (Singapore: Pustaka al-Qalam, 1957), p. 10; idem, *Sembahyang Rasūl Allāh* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Melayu Baru, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1982), p. 9; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. (continued...)

- a. The "touching" (*mulāmasah*) mentioned in the Q: 4: 43 & 5: 6 means sexual intercourse, not touching by hand, or kissing, or skin contact. The word *lāmasa* in the verse itself hints at this meaning: that *lāmasa* is of the form *fāʿala* which indicates mutual action between two parties, unlike the word *lamasa* which is of the form *faʿala* which signifies single side action. Therefore, what is meant by *lāmasa* - mutual touching - in its usual sense is definitely sexual intercourse, not just any touching.<sup>25</sup>
- b. Furthermore, if skin contact nullifies ablution, then touching the skin of one's next of kin such as mothers, sisters and daughters, would also nullify the ablution, for the word *al-nisā'* (women) in the verses does not differentiate between women to whom marriage is forbidden (*maḥram*) and women to whom marriage is allowed (*ghayr al-maḥram*).<sup>26</sup>
- c. If the "touching" (*mulāmasah*) mentioned in the two verses is understood as skin contact, it could also be understood as indirect contact, i.e. touching women's clothes, for the verses do not differentiate between touching women's skin and touching them over their clothes, and this is a judgement that all are agreed is invalid.<sup>27</sup>
- d. There are several Prophetic traditions which signify that skin contact does not nullify ablution.<sup>28</sup> Among them are:

"c'Ā'ishah said: The Prophet used to kiss some of his wives, and then perform prayer without redoing ablution."<sup>29</sup>

"c'Ā'ishah said that the Prophet kissed her while he was fasting and said: 'Indeed, this kissing does not nullify ablution and does not break one's

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<sup>24</sup>(...continued)

1, p. 54; idem, *Pengajaran Shalat*, op.cit., p. 208.

<sup>25</sup>A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 60

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 61-62; idem, *Pengajaran Shalat*, op.cit., p. 208.

<sup>27</sup>A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat*, op.cit., p. 208.

<sup>28</sup>A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 57-58; idem, *Pengajaran Shalat*, op.cit., p. 209.

<sup>29</sup>Narrated by Muslim, Aḥmad, Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasā'ī and al-Tirmidhī. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ṭahārah," 495; *al-Musnad*, "Bāqī Musnad al-Anṣār," 24584; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in "Kitāb al-Ṭahārah," 152; *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 180; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 79.

fasting’”<sup>30</sup>

“‘Ā’ishah said: I used to sleep in front of the Prophet (while he was praying) while my legs were opposite his *qiblah*. And in prostration he pushed my legs and I withdrew then and when he stood, I stretched them. In those days the houses were without lights.”<sup>31</sup>

“‘Ā’ishah said: One night I missed the Messenger of God from the bed, and when I sought him my hand touched the soles of his feet while he was in the state of prostration; they (feet) were raised...”<sup>32</sup>

These traditions, according to the reformists, clearly show that touching does not nullify ablution.

Whatever the reformists’ arguments are, the traditionalists insist that the “touching” (*mulāmasah*) mentioned in the two verses must be regarded as denoting its real meaning and not its metaphorical meaning (*majāzī*) since every word is understood to be used in its original meaning unless there is a contrary indication. Concerning the traditions of the Prophet’s kissing his wives, the traditionalists affirm the Shāfi’īs’ position that these traditions are weak (*ḍa‘īf*) or incompletely transmitted (*mursal*) and should not be considered as strong proofs. Furthermore, the traditions mentioning the Prophet’s touching ‘Ā’ishah’s foot and ‘Ā’ishah’s touching the Prophet’s foot should be understood to mean that the touching was over an obstruction (*ḥā’il*) or if not, they must be considered as referring to a special judgement for the Prophet only.<sup>33</sup>

The reformists answer that although the traditions of the Prophet’s kissing may be individually weak, they strengthen each other which, can be regarded, as acknowledged by the science of tradition (*‘ilm muṣṭalaḥ al-ḥadīth*), as ‘good by virtue of others’ (*ḥasan li-ghayrih*). To understand that ‘Ā’ishah, in the other sound

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<sup>30</sup>Narrated by Ibn Rahawayh and al-Bazzār, as quoted in Saiyyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1971), vol. 1, p. 90.

<sup>31</sup>Narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasā’ī and Aḥmad. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, “Kitāb al-Ṣalāh,” 369; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, “Kitāb al-Ṣalāh,” 796; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, “Kitāb al-Ṣalāh,” 611; *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, “Kitāb al-Ṭahārah,” 167; *al-Musnad*, “Bāqī Musnad al-Anṣār,” 24697.

<sup>32</sup>Narrated by Muslim, al-Tirmidhī and al-Nasā’ī. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, “Kitāb al-Ṣalāh,” 751; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, “Kitāb al-Da‘awāt,” 3415; *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, “Kitāb al-Taṭbīq,” 1088.

<sup>33</sup>See A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp.58-63.

tradition, touched the Prophet's foot over an obstruction (*ḥā'il*) or that this was a special judgement for the Prophet cannot be acknowledged as there is no evidence that proves this.<sup>34</sup>

In holding their view, the traditionalists encounter a problem during circumambulation (*ṭawāf*) around the Ka'bah while performing *ḥajj* or *ʿumrah* as they are exposed to a lot of unavoidable touching from the crowds of people who are circumambulating the Ka'bah. To sort out this problem, they have identified three possible solutions. Firstly, they can temporarily leave the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* in this case and accept the judgement of the other *madhhabs* (i.e. the Ḥanafī, Mālikī, and Ḥanbalī *madhhabs*) which maintain that mere touching never nullifies ablution.<sup>35</sup> This practice is permissible in case of difficulty (*mashaqqah*), and some scholars even allow that people should follow the law of the *madhhab* practised in Sa'ūdī Arabia (i.e. the Ḥanbalī *madhhab*) while they are there (i.e. to practise *talfiq*).<sup>36</sup> Secondly, they may hold the anonymous viewpoint in the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* that touching nullifies the toucher's ablution only, not the touched person's ablution.<sup>37</sup> Thirdly, they may hold the original viewpoint, but they need to be ultra-careful during the circumambulation. They must make every effort not to be in contact with the opposite sex; if they are touched, they must repeat their ablution.<sup>38</sup>

However, the first solution seems to be very unpopular amongst the traditionalists as they feel it inconvenient and strange to practise another *madhhab*'s standpoint for they belong to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*. The second solution is rarely practised as it is not a definite standpoint (*qawl mu'tamad*) in the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*. The third choice is the most popular solution. This is the way they choose and they

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<sup>34</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62.

<sup>35</sup>This is the opinion of the *Muftī* of Perak, Dato' Harussani Zakaria as quoted by Mohd. Radzi Othman and O. K. Rahmat Baharuddin in *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Negeri Perlis dan Kaitannya dengan Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Negeri-negeri Lain di Malaysia* (Pulau Pinang: USM, 1991), p. 278.

<sup>36</sup>The standpoint of the *Muftī* of Pahang Dato' Muhammad Taib Hassan as quoted in *ibid.*, p. 305.

<sup>37</sup>This is the statement of the Chief *Qāḍī* of Kedah, Abdul Halim Abd Rahman and the Chief of Kedah Religious Council, Dato' Yusuf Ismail, as quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 311-312.

<sup>38</sup>This is a well known standpoint held by most traditionalists in Malaysia.

feel convenient with this solution, even if it is somewhat difficult to avoid touching others and to have to walk far away to the ablution centre to repeat their ablution. This difficulty is regarded as one of the difficulties which they must struggle and be patient with in order to get an accepted *ḥajj* (*ḥajj mabrūr*). This is the most satisfactory solution for those who hold the principle that the adherents of Shāfiʿī *madhhab* should stick to it as far as they are able to.

## Recitations of Certain Prayers Before *Adhān* (The Call For Prayer)

It is a common practice among the traditionalists in Malaysia to recite certain prayers before doing *adhān*. Normally, the *muʾadhdhin* (caller), who is known in Malaysia as *Tok Bilal* or *Bilal*<sup>39</sup> recites the *ṣalawāt ʿalā al-Nabī* (blessing upon the Prophet; in Malay: *selawat*), followed by the profession of faith (*shahādah*) and *ḥawqalah*, i.e. to utter "*Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh* (there is no power and no strength save in God)" over the mosque's loudspeakers at the beginning of every prayer time, and then doing the *adhān*. In the southern part of the Malay Peninsula, the *Tok Bilal* chants some other prayers prior to the beginning of the *ṣubḥ* (dawn), *ʿaṣr* (afternoon) and Friday prayers. The *Tok Bilal* takes about twenty to thirty minutes to chant some prayers called *Doa Tarḥīm*, *Selawat Nūriyyah*, *Doa Taubat* and *Qasidah*.

The *Doa Tarḥīm* chanted is: "*Yā arḥam al-rāḥimīna rḥam-nā* (O the Most Merciful of those who show mercy, have mercy on us)." The chanting of the *Doa Tarḥīm* is regularly repeated up to a hundred times. The *Selawat Nūriyyah* chanted is: "*Allāhumma ṣalli wa sallim ʿalā nūr al-anwār, wa sirr al-asrār, saiyidi-nā wa maulānā Muḥammad al-mukhtār* (O God, bless and have peace upon the light of the lights, and secret of the secrets, our chief and our master, Muḥammad the selected). The *Doa Taubat* chanted is: "*Ilāhī lastu li-al-Firdaws ahlan wa-lā aqwā ʿalā nār al-jahīm, - Allāhu - fa-hab lī tawbatan wa-ghfir dhunūbī, fa-innaka ghāfir al-dhanb al-ʿaẓīm* (O

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<sup>39</sup>This epithet is derived from the name of first *muadhdhin* in Islam appointed by the Prophet Muḥammad, namely Bilāl b. Rabāḥ.

God, I am not entitled for the Paradise, and I am not strong to be in Hell, - O God - give me repentance and forgive my sins, indeed you are the Forgiver of the great sin)." These prayers are chanted numerous times until the prayer time begins. For the Friday prayer, the *Tok Bilal* begins his chanting of these prayers earlier besides chanting the *Qasidah*, i.e. the chapter of *Qasidat al-Burdah* written by Muḥammad al-Būṣīrī, the third chapter of the book *Majmūʿ Mawlid Sharaf al-Anām*, the Arabic poetry book compiled by Jaʿfar al-Barzanjī that contains praises for the Prophet Muḥammad as well as the narration of his life.

The *Tok Bilal* in the northern and eastern states of the Malay Peninsula appears to have a different ritual. Here, the *Tok Bilal* recites some verses or *sūrahs* of the Qurʾān over the mosque's loudspeakers instead of chanting the prayers. If he for some reason is unable to recite the verses himself, a recorded version is played. In other places, especially in the rural areas, a special big drum called *beduk* placed outside the mosque is beaten in a certain manner to signal the beginning of certain prayers. The purpose of reciting the Qurʾān or chanting the prayers and *Qasidah* before *adhān* over the mosque's loudspeakers is purportedly to remind the people that the time of prayer is about to begin, and to let them prepare themselves for the congregational prayer. It is also thought to be a distinguishing mark (*shif ār*) of the Muslim tradition.

The reformists denounce this practice considering it as a blameworthy innovation (*bidʿah*) which should be avoided and banned.<sup>61</sup> The reformists affirm that this practice was never practised by the Prophet Muḥammad, his Companions, the Pious Forefathers nor has it been acknowledged by any jurists even those of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. They maintain that there is no such prayer taught by the Prophet Muḥammad before the *adhān*.<sup>62</sup> They hold that the Prophet Muḥammad only taught the prayer that accompanies the *adhān* and the prayer after it. Among the prescribed prayers to be said by the listener of the *adhān*, as mentioned in the Prophetic

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<sup>61</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasūlullāh*, op.cit., pp. 16-17; Abdullah al-Qari b. Hj. Salleh, *200 Bidʿah Hari Jumaat Di Dunia Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: al-Hidayah Publisher, 1997), p. 39; Hashim A. Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab* (Kuala Pilah: KTF Institut, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.1987), pp. 95-96, 153-154.

<sup>62</sup>Hashim A. Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., p. 96; Saiyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 217-218.



traditions are: saying what is said by the *mu'adhdhin* during the *adhān*<sup>63</sup> and reciting the *al-ṣalāt 'alā al-nabī*<sup>64</sup> and the *shahādah*<sup>65</sup> after the *adhān*, and lastly reciting this prayer: "*Allāhumma rabba hādhihi al-dāwat al-tāmmah wa al-ṣalāt al-qā'imah, āti Muḥammad al-wasīlata wa-faḍīlah, wa-b'ath-hu maqāman maḥmūdān alladhī wa'ad-tah* (O God, Lord of this perfect call and of the prayer which is going to be established, give Muhammad the right of intercession and superiority, and send him (on the Day of Judgment) to the best and the highest place which You have promised him)"<sup>66</sup>

For the reformists, reciting the Qur'ān and chanting the prayers over the mosque's loudspeakers before the *adhān* would not only disturb the surrounding people who may be resting or studying, and disturb the people in the mosque who are doing *i'tikāf* (seclusion in a mosque for the remembrance of God) or reciting the Qur'ān<sup>67</sup> but it would also lead the reciter to commit the sin of *riyā'* (proud to be seen of men) and *sum'ah* (seeking good reputation) which are of the lesser polytheism (*al-shirk al-ṣaghīr*).<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, they argue, the recitation of the Qur'ān is to be understood by the reciter and not to be proud of his good recitation and melodious voice.<sup>69</sup> The reformists further their argumentation that chanting the prayers loudly before *adhān* contradicts Islamic ethics as one should not raise his voice during praying to God to be heard by other people. The Qur'ān clearly states: "Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He does not like the aggressors" (7: 55); "And remember your

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<sup>63</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Ādhān," 576; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 576; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 192, and others.

<sup>64</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 577; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Manāqib," 3547; *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, "Kitāb al-Ādhān," 671, and others.

<sup>65</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 579; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 194; *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, "Kitāb al-Ādhān," 672; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 441, and others.

<sup>66</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Ādhān," 579; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 195; *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, "Kitāb al-Ādhān," 673; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 445, *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, "Kitāb al-Ādhān wa al-Sunnat fih," 714; *Musnad Aḥmad*, "Kitāb Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn," 14289.

<sup>67</sup>Hashim A. Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., p. 153.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid.

Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear without loudness in words in the mornings, and in the afternoons and do not be of those who are neglectful” (7: 205).

The reformists conclude that the *adhān* is enough to remind Muslims of the prayer times, to call them for the congregational prayer, or to be a *shī‘ār* of the Muslim traditions, and they need nothing else to achieve that purpose.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, they assert that adding something new in religious matters, particularly in the realm of *‘ibādah* is regarded as *bid‘ah*.

### The Utterance of Intention (*Al-Talaffuz bi-al-Niyyah*)

It is known that intention (*niyyah*) is an obligatory pillar (*rukṇ*) of the prayer. Generally, scholars agree that the intention is made in the heart. However, some of them affirm that it is recommendable (*mustahabb*) to utter the intention as it can remind and support the heart to determine the prayer.<sup>2</sup> In the Malaysian context, this opinion has been firmly adopted by the traditionalists of the Shāfi‘ite *madhhab*. According to them, the intention should be uttered prior to the beginning of a prayer, i.e. before the *takbīrat-ul-iḥrām* (the *takbīr* of sanctification) mentioning, alongside determination in the heart, the action and specification of the prayer:<sup>3</sup> “*Uṣallī fard* (or *sunnah*) *al-ḡuhr* (or *al-‘asr* / *al-maghrib* / *al-‘ishā’* / *al-ṣubḥ* etc.), *arbā a rakā‘āt* (or *rak‘atayn* / *thalātha rakā‘āt* etc.) *mustaqbil al-qiblah adā’an* (or *qaḍā’an*), *imāman*

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<sup>1</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasulullāh*, op.cit., p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>This is the opinion of the majority of scholars except the Mālikis who see that uttering the intention is permissible (*jawāz*), but it is preferable (*awlā*) to omit the utterance. See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa-Adillatuh*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 613.

<sup>3</sup>According to the Shāfi‘ite, *niyyah* for obligatory *ṣalāhs* should consist of three elements, namely, *qaṣd al-ḡā’ al-fī’l* (purpose of doing the action, i.e. the action of *ṣalāh*); *niyyat al-fardīyyah* (intention of its obligatoriness); and *ta’yīn naw’ al-fardīyyah* (specification of the type of the obligatoriness). These elements should be clearly appeared in one’s *niyyah* of the *ṣalāhs*. It is not compulsory but recommendable to determine other specifications, namely, *al-iḡāfah ilā-Allāh* (attribution to God); *istiqbāl al-qiblah* (facing the Qiblah); *‘adad al-rakā‘āt* (the number of *rakāḥ*); *imāmiyyah* or *ma’mūmiyyah* (leading or following position); and *ḥāl-u-hā adā’iyyan aw qaḍā’iyyan* (the condition of the *ṣalāh* whether it is a prayer accomplished within the time or prayer that is owed. See Abū Ishāq al-Shirāzī, *al-Muhadhdhab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 70; al-Sharbīnī al-Khaṭīb, *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 148, 150, 252-253.

(or *ma'mūman*) *lillāh-i -ta'ālā*" ("I pray the obligatory *zuhr* - midday prayer - [or the *ʿasr* - afternoon prayer - /the *maghrib* - sunset prayer - /the *ʿishā* - nightfall prayer - /the *ṣubḥ* - dawn prayer] four *rakʿāt* (sing. *rakʿah* - literally means bowing) (or two *rakʿahs* or three *rakʿahs* etc.) facing the direction of the *qiblah* (the Kā bah) within the time, (or making it up after the time) as leader (or follower) for the sake of God").

The utterance of intention has been generally taught among Malays, and has become an accustomed practice among them. When children are taught about the prayer in a formal or informal education system, they are firstly asked to memorize the intention as an obligatory part of the prayer. When performing the prayer, they are taught to put their memorized intention into words. The nature of intention is therefore understood as a combination of determination by the heart and articulation by the tongue.

This rooted understanding and practice is deeply criticised by the reformists who simply blame the utterance of intention, known as "*uṣalli*", as *bidʿah*, for it has not ever been practiced by the Prophet Muḥammad, his Companions, the pious Forefathers (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) and the four Imams of the established *madhhabs*.<sup>4</sup> This practice, they claim, is based only on superficial reason without any authoritative evidences from the Quran, the Sunnah, the practice of the Companions, *ijmāʿ*, *qiyās* and others. However, the traditionalists strongly insist that this practice has been legally approved by the scholars and widely practiced by all other Muslims; it is a well known practice and it is a good *bidʿah*.<sup>5</sup>

There has been a long unresolved dispute between the traditionalists and the reformists regarding this issue as they hold on to their respective standpoints showing their non-compromising attitude. The traditionalists perceive that the utterance of

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<sup>4</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasulullah S. A. W* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Melayu Baru, new ed. 1981), p. 21; Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Risalah Penebas Bidʿah-bidʿah di Kepala Batas* (Pulau Pinang: Lembaga Persediaan Majlis Muzakarah Kampung Baharu, no date), pp. 27-28. Hashim A. Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 107-110, 141-143; A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat*, op.cit., pp. 212-213; idem, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 91-93.

<sup>5</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 108-109; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 91-95; Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Risalah Penebas*, op.cit., pp. 26-29.

the intention before a prayer is recommended for several reasons which can be summarized as follows:

- a. The utterance of intention is legally approved as stated in many books as the tongue can normally help and support the heart to determine the prayer. The heart is often careless and doubtful, so it needs to be reminded by the tongue with an organized phrase depicting the action that will be done.<sup>6</sup>
- b. The utterance of intention prior to the prayer is evident by *qiyās* (analogy) with the intention of the *ḥajj* that was uttered by the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>7</sup>
- c. Although the Prophet Muḥammad never uttered his intention in performing the prayer, it is a good *bidʿah* (*bidʿah ḥasanah*) which will strengthen one's intention to perform the prayer.
- d. Many scholars, including great *qādis* and *muftis*, hold this opinion and utter their intention before a prayer.

The traditionalists finally maintain that this issue is a question about which there is dispute (*masʿāl al-khilāfiyyah*), and it is up to individuals to decide their own choice.

The reformists deny all these reasons arguing that:<sup>8</sup>

- a. The traditionalist's argument that the utterance of intention has been legally approved cannot be accepted as there is no textual evidence (*dalīl*) which can justify the matter. The simple reason that the tongue will help reminding and

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<sup>6</sup>The reason that the tongue helps the heart is stated in every single traditional Malay *fiqh* book taught in *pondoks* and *suraus* in Malaysia. See for example, Daud b. Abdullah Fatani, *Munyat al-Muṣallī* (Pulau Pinang: al-Maʿārif, n.d.) p. 8; idem., *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 1. p. 109; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭlaʿ al-Badrayn*, op.cit., p. 30. See also, the *fatwā* given by the *muftī* of Johor, Syed<sup>c</sup> Alwī b. Ṭāhir al-Ḥaddād, in *Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor* (Johor: Jabatan Agama Johor, new ed. 1990), vol. 1, pp. 31-32; Ali b. Abdullah Baldram, *Perukunan ʿIbādah Sepanjang Zaman* (Pulau Pinang: Percetakan al-Māʿārif, n.d.), p. 50.

<sup>7</sup>As narrated by Muslim and others that the Prophet Muḥammad said when going into *iḥrām*: "Here we are, O God, for doing *ḥajj* and *ʿumrah*" (*Labbay-ka bi-ḥajj wa ʿumrah*). See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in "Kitāb al-Ḥajj", 2194, 2195.

<sup>8</sup>See Hashim A. Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 109-110, 141-143; Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasulullah S. A. W*, op.cit., pp. 21-24; A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat*, op.cit., pp. 212-213; Idem, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1. pp. 91-94.

supporting the heart is neither valid, nor reasonable and may even be a lie, as logically it is the heart which moves the tongue and the body and not vice-versa. The place of intention is in the heart, not at the tongue. It is absurd that the utterance of intention is made only for specific acts of *‘ibādāt* such as ablution, prayer, fasting and pilgrimage, but not for the other acts of *‘ibādāt*, such as almsgiving, recitation of the Qur’ān, remembrance (*dhikr*), invocation (*du‘ā’*), call for prayer (*ādhān*) and others. The reason that the utterance of intention is mentioned in many books is also rejected, as books cannot be justified as the yardstick of the truth, and in fact, there are also many books that denounce the practice.

- b. To use the method of *qiyās* in equating the prayer with *ḥajj* is void as the *ḥajj* is not similar to the prayer. The status of prayer is superior to the *ḥajj*, and it is not permissible, according to the method of *qiyās* in the science of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), to judge a superior one by analogy with an inferior one. Furthermore, *qiyās* is not permissible in the matter of *‘ibādah* as stated by al-Shāfi‘ī.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, they question, how the traditionalists who are of the Shāfi‘ite *madhhab* can hold on to something which contradicts their leader’s principle? They further question that if *qiyās* in the matter of *‘ibādah* is permissible, why aren’t *ādhān* and *iqāmah* done before prayer for the deceased (*ṣalāh al-janā’iz*), *‘id* prayer and *tarāwīḥ* prayer, measuring them by analogy with the five obligatory prayers?; or why isn’t the *Ṣubḥ* prayer shortened to one *rak‘ah* during travelling, as the *Zuhr*, *‘Aṣr* and *‘Ishā’* prayers can be shortened to two *rak‘ahs*?<sup>10</sup>
- c. Uttering the intention is not a good *bid‘ah*. As a matter of fact, there is no good *bid‘ah* in religious matters as stated by the Prophet: “Whoever innovates something in our business (religion) which is not in harmony with the

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<sup>9</sup>As cited in A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1. pp. 93.

<sup>10</sup>A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat*, op.cit., pp. 212-213; idem, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1. pp. 91-94.

principles of the religion, that thing is rejected;"<sup>11</sup> "and every *bid'ah* is an error."<sup>12</sup> The matter of *'ibādah* has been completely taught by the Prophet Muḥammad, and there is no space for *ijtihād*. To regard an innovated thing as a good *bid'ah* is a serious error, as Mālik said: "Whoever innovates an innovation in Islam and finds it good, it is, as if he has assumed that the Prophet has betrayed the message of God."<sup>13</sup>

- d. The source of truth is the Quran and the Sunnah. Truth cannot be measured by the long robes and big turbans of the grand scholars, *qadīs* and *muftā*. It is safer to follow the way pioneered by the Prophet, his Companions and the pious forefathers than following others.

The reformists further maintain that this issue is not a question about which there is dispute (*masā'il al-khilāfiyyah*), as it has no basis from any textual proofs (*adillah*). For them, the *masā'il al-khilāfiyyah* occur when there are a variety of perceptions in understanding the textual proofs. This is a matter of *sunnah* and *bid'ah*, not the *masā'il al-khilāfiyyah*.<sup>14</sup>

Both parties hold strongly to their respective standpoints. In this case, some extreme traditionalists were misguided as they attempted to commit a lie saying that the utterance of intention is based on a sound *ḥadīth* of the Prophet Muḥammad allegedly narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. A book written by al-Faqīr Hārūn b. Muḥammad al-Ṣamadī al-Kalantanī entitled *Durūs al-Tawḥīd wa al-Fiqh wa al-Taṣawwuf* conveys a fabricated *ḥadīth* to justify the utterance of intention. The book says: "Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrated in their *takhrīj*, from Ibn 'Umar, that when the Apostle peace be upon him was sitting with his companions in the mosque, Fāṭimah

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<sup>11</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in 'Kitāb al-Ṣulḥ', 2499; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in 'Kitāb al-Aqḍiyah', 3242, 3243; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in 'Kitāb al-Sunnah', 3990; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in 'Kitāb al-Muqaddimah', 14; *al-Musnad*, in 'Bāqī Musnad al-Anṣār', 23311.

<sup>12</sup>See *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in 'Kitāb al-Muqaddimah', 45; *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in 'Kitāb al-Muqaddimah', 208; *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, in 'Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Idāin', 1560.

<sup>13</sup>Al-Shāṭibī, *al-F'tiṣām* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, no date), vol. 1. p. 49.

<sup>14</sup>Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Masalah Khilafiyah* (Perlis: Persatuan al-Islah Perlis, n. d), pp. 4-5.



came asking him about <sup>ʿ</sup>Aṣr prayer. The Apostle said, “Say *uṣallī farḍ al-ʿaṣr arbaʿa rakʿāt adāʿan li-llāhi taʿālā*. (I pray the obligatory <sup>ʿ</sup>Aṣr four *rakʿāt* within the time for the sake of God).”<sup>15</sup> This alleged *ḥadīth* has never been found in any authoritative *ḥadīth* books, especially not in al-Bukhārī’s and Muslim’s *Ṣaḥīḥ*. Other books are found to have the same fabricated *ḥadīth*.<sup>16</sup> These books have been strongly condemned by the reformists as they blatantly commit a “big lie” to gain support from the public without thinking of the risks.<sup>17</sup>

### Pronouncing the *Basmalah* Before Reciting *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*

The jurists disagree with the practice of pronouncing the *basmalah* or *tasmiyah* i.e. to say *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* (In the name of God, the Beneficent, the Merciful) before reciting *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* in the prayer. The four *madhhabs* seem to have different views on this case. Abū Ḥanīfah held that the *basmalah* should be pronounced inaudibly (*sirr*) in each *rakʿah* with *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* even though he did not regard the *basmalah* as a verse of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. Mālik prohibited this in the obligatory prayers, whether loudly (*jahr*) or inaudibly at the beginning of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* or any other *sūrah*s, but permitted it in supererogatory prayers. Al-Shāfiʿī affirmed that it should be pronounced aloud in the case of audible recitation and in a whisper in the case of inaudible recitation, for the *basmalah*, according to him, is a verse of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal held the same opinion as Abū Ḥanīfah, i.e. the *basmalah* should be pronounced inaudibly, but regarded the *basmalah* as a verse of *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>See Faqir Harun b. Muhammad Samadī Kalantani, *Durūs al-Tawḥīd wa al-Fiqh wa al-Taṣawwuf*. (Penang: Persama Press, no date), p. 16.

<sup>16</sup>See for example, H. M. Ṭaiyib b. Hj. Umar Djenieh, *Dinding Syubhat*. (Jawa: Pustaka Ilmu, n.d) p. 23.

<sup>17</sup>See Hashim A. Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 141-142.

<sup>18</sup>As quoted in Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 646-654; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, n.d.) vol. 1, pp. 124-125; al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-*  
(continued...)

In Malaysia, the traditionalists strongly hold al-Shāfi'ī's view whilst the reformists adopt Aḥmad's standpoint. The reasons for this disagreement are due to the disputation between the different jurists they choose to follow which can be simplified as follows:

The traditionalists base their viewpoint on al-Shāfi'ī's view that inasmuch as the *basmalah* is a verse of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, it must be pronounced according to its recitation, i.e. loudly in audible recitation ( the first two *rak'ahs* in Maghrib and 'Ishā' prayers, and in both *rak'ahs* of the Ṣubḥ prayer), and inaudibly in inaudible recitation.<sup>19</sup> Al-Shāfi'ī held that the *basmalah* is the seventh verse of *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, and if it is abandoned, the *rak'ah* of the prayer is not complete.<sup>20</sup>

There are also many Prophetic traditions indicating that the Prophet used to begin the recitation in his prayer by pronouncing the *basmalah*. It is narrated on the authority of Na'īm b. 'Abd Allāh al-Mujammir who said, "I observed prayer led by Abū Hurayrah and he recited *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* before the *umm al-Qur'ān* and before the *sūrah*, and he pronounced *takbīr* while bowing and while straightening up. He then said, 'I provide you with a semblance of the prayer of the Messenger of God.'"<sup>21</sup> Al-Shāfi'ī narrated from Ibn 'Abbās that he said, "The Prophet used to begin the recitation in his prayer by pronouncing *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*."<sup>22</sup> He also narrated from Anas b. Mālīk that he said, "Mu'āwiyah led the prayer in Madīnah and he began the recitation without pronouncing *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*, and without pronouncing *takbīr* while bowing and straightening up. After the prayer, the Muhājirūn and the Anṣār said to him, 'O Mu'āwiyah, you have shortened the prayer. Where was *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* and where was the *takbīr* when

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<sup>18</sup>(...continued)  
Awṭār, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 198-206.

<sup>19</sup>Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Tullāb*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 114-115; Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 130; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭla' al-Badrayn*, op.cit., p. 31.

<sup>20</sup>Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 155-157.

<sup>21</sup>Narrated by al-Nasā'ī, Ibn Ḥibbān and Ibn Khuzaymah, as quoted in Sayyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 243.

<sup>22</sup>Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 155; see also *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 245.

you were bowing and straightening up?’ When he led the prayer again after that, he pronounced *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* and the *takbīr* loudly.”<sup>23</sup> To strengthen their view, the traditionalists eventually cite al-Shīrāzī’s words that the traditions indicating the *basmalah* is pronounced loudly in audible prayer are also narrated on the authority of either Bukhārī, or Muslim, or both of them from six Companions of the Prophet, namely, Abū Hurayrah, Umm Salamah, Ibn ‘Abbās, Anas b. Mālik, ‘Alī b. Abī Tālib and Samurah b. Jundub.<sup>24</sup> They conclude, although there are some traditions that mention that the Prophet and his Companions did not pronounce the *basmalah* loudly, they must be interpreted that the Companions who narrated the traditions did not hear the pronunciation while the others heard it.<sup>25</sup>

The reformists, who opt for the Ḥanbalīs’ standpoint on this issue, say that although the *basmalah* is a verse of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, it must be pronounced inaudibly as this is what the Prophet used to do. There are a lot of Prophetic traditions that support this. Anas b. Mālik said, “I prayed behind the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, and I never heard them pronounce *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm*.”<sup>26</sup> He also narrated, “I prayed behind the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān, and they began the recitation with *al-Ḥamd li-Allāh Rabb al-‘Ālamīn*, they did not pronounce *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* either at the beginning of the recitation or at the end.”<sup>27</sup> It is also narrated from Anas that he said, “I prayed behind the Prophet, Abū Bakr, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān and they never pronounced *Bi-ism Allāh al-Raḥmān al-Raḥīm* loudly.”<sup>28</sup> Ibn ‘Abd Allāh b. Mughaffal said, “My father heard me when I was reciting

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<sup>23</sup>Narrated by al-Shāfi‘ī as cited in *Nayl al-Awtār*, op.cit., vol 1, p 200; see also, al-Shāfi‘ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 157.

<sup>24</sup>See al-Shīrāzī, *al-Majmū‘*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 302.

<sup>25</sup>As quoted in A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 96.

<sup>26</sup>Narrated by all traditionists. See for example, *Ṣaḥīḥ Bukhārī*, “Kitāb al-Adhān,” 701; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, “Kitāb al-Ṣalāh,” 605; *Al-Musnad*, “Kitāb Baqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn,” 12858.

<sup>27</sup>Narrated by Muslim and Aḥmad. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, “Kitāb al-Ṣalāh,” 606; *al-Musnad*, “Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn,” 13276.

<sup>28</sup>Narrated by Aḥmad and al-Nasā‘ī. See for example, *al-Musnad*, “Musnad al-Mukthirīn,” 12380, 13406, 13284.

the *basmalah*, and said, 'O my son, beware of innovation, for I have prayed with the Messenger of God, Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān, but I did not hear any of them reciting it. Therefore do not say that. If you begin the recitation, say *Al-Ḥamd li-Allāh Rabb al-ʿĀlamīn*.'"<sup>29</sup> All those traditions, according to the reformists, clearly indicate that the *basmalah* should be pronounced inaudibly in all prayers.

Regarding the traditions which mention that the Prophet pronounced the *basmalah* loudly, the reformists interpret them as the Prophet's purpose in showing the *ummah* that the *basmalah* is a verse of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. They conclude that there are more traditions which mention that the Prophet and his Companions pronounced the *basmalah* inaudibly than there are ones mentioning otherwise. Therefore, they claim, the Prophet used to pronounce it inaudibly more often than he pronounced it loudly, so much so that some Companions assumed that the Prophet never ever pronounced it.<sup>30</sup>

### The Recitation of *Qunūt* (Supplication)<sup>31</sup> in the Ṣubḥ Prayer

The issue of *qunūt* has been the cause of endless polemic between the traditionalists and the reformists in Malaysia. This is, in fact, the result of disagreement between the jurists on this issue. Abū Ḥanīfah held that reciting *qunūt* is not permitted in the Ṣubḥ prayer, and its place is in the *witr* prayer. Mālik maintained that *qunūt* is recommended for the Ṣubḥ prayer, while al-Shāfiʿī held that it is *sunnah* in the Ṣubḥ prayer. Aḥmad held the same opinion as Abū Ḥanīfah.<sup>32</sup> In this case, the reformists appear to be in favour of Abū Ḥanīfah and Aḥmad's standpoint, while the

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<sup>29</sup>Narrated by five of the traditionists except Abū Dāwūd, as quoted in al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 205.

<sup>30</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasulullah*, op.cit., pp. 27-28.

<sup>31</sup>Originally *qunūt* means humility. *Qunūt* here means supplication during the *f tida*l in the last *raʿah* of the Ṣubḥ prayer or other prayers.

<sup>32</sup>However, the jurists agree that *qunūt* is recommended in every obligatory prayers during calamity (*nāzilah*). See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 809-818; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 131-133, al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 339-344.

traditionalists consistently remain with al-Shāfi'ī's viewpoint.

The traditionalists hold, as affirmed by the jurists of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, that the recitation of *qunūt* in the *Ṣubḥ* and *witr* prayers during the second half of Ramaḍān is recommended, for it is regarded as an important part of the prayer (*sunnat al-ab'ād*). If it is omitted, it is recommended to be replaced by doing *sujūd al-sahw* (prostration of forgetfulness) at the end of the prayer.<sup>33</sup> The prescribed text of the *qunūt*, according to them, as narrated by al-Ḥākim from Abū Hurayrah, is: "O God, guide me with those You have guided, and deliver me with those You have delivered, and take me into Your charge with those You have taken into Your charge, and bless me in what You have given, and guard me from the evil of what You have decreed, You are the One who decrees, and there is no decree for You. He whom You befriend is not humbled. You are the Glorious, our Lord, and the Exalted." These words should be pronounced loudly, with both hands raised.

The reformists perceive that reciting *qunūt* daily in the *Ṣubḥ* prayer with such a text is not recommended, and if it is practised constantly, it can even lead to committing *bid'ah*, since according to them, the Prophet never did such a practice, and there is no strong proof that indicates this.<sup>34</sup> The discussion on this case can be described as follows:

The traditionalists base their standpoint on the following traditions:

Anas b. Mālik said: "The Apostle recited *qunūt* for a month for cursing the killers of his Companions at Bi'r Ma'ūnah, and then he omitted it. Regarding the *qunūt* in the *Ṣubḥ* prayer, he still recited *qunūt* until he passed away." (This tradition is considered authentic by al-Ḥākim).<sup>35</sup>

Al-Rabī' said: "A man asked Anas b. Mālik, 'Did the Messenger of God recite the *qunūt* for a month asking for an Arab tribe to be cursed?' Anas rebuked

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<sup>33</sup>Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Tullāb*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 123; Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, op.cit., p. 97; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭlā' al-Badrain*, p. 34. See also, al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 110; al-Sharbīnī al-Khaṭīb, *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 166; al-Shīrāzī, *al-Majmū'*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 474-490; al-Bājūrī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Bājūrī*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 168.

<sup>34</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasulullah*, op.cit., pp. 87-88; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., p. 11-14, 233-235; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 129-136.

<sup>35</sup>Narrated by Aḥmad, al-Dāraqutnī, Abd al-Razzāq, Abū Nu'aym, al-Bayhaqī, and al-Ḥākim. See for example, *al-Musnad*, "Musnad al-Mukthirīn," 12196; al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 340.

him saying: 'The Messenger of God never left the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer until he passed away.'"<sup>36</sup>

Anas said: "I prayed behind the Messenger of God, and he never left the *qunūt* in the morning prayer until he passed away. And I prayed behind Abū Bakr and 'Umar, and they did the same thing."<sup>37</sup>

Al-'Awwām b. Ḥamzah said: "I asked Abū 'Uthmān regarding the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer and he said: 'After bowing.' I asked him again: 'From whom?' He replied: 'From Abū Bakr, 'Umar and 'Uthmān.'"<sup>38</sup>

'Abd Allāh al-Ma'qil said: "'Alī recited the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer."<sup>39</sup>

Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said: "I prayed behind twenty eight Companions who participated in the battle of Badr, and they all recited the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer after bowing."<sup>40</sup>

All these traditions, according to the traditionalists, indicate that the Prophet, the Rightly Guided Caliphs and his Companions never omitted the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer, and therefore, reciting the *qunūt* is a *sunnah* which should not be omitted. Regarding the opinion that there is no such *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer, one traditionalist *muftī* said that those who perceive so might not be aware of these traditions.<sup>41</sup> However, the matter is not as simple as they claim because the reformists are aware of these traditions but reject the argumentation of these traditions for several reasons which can be described as follows:

- a. The first and second traditions are weak (*ḍa'īf*) in the opinion of all traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*), except al-Ḥākim who regards them as authentic. This is because, as formerly stated by al-Shawkānī, there is Abū Ja'far b. Al-Rāzī in the chain of narrators, who was identified by the traditionists as a person who had a weak memory and made a lot of mistakes,<sup>42</sup> and therefore,

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<sup>36</sup>Narrated by Ishāq b. Rāhawayh, as cited in al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 341.

<sup>37</sup>Narrated by Al-Ḥasan b. Sufyān, as cited in ibid.

<sup>38</sup>Narrated by al-Bayhaqī as stated in A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 131.

<sup>39</sup>Narrated by al-Bayhaqī and al-Shāfi'ī as stated in ibid.

<sup>40</sup>Narrated by al-Ḥākim and Abū Aḥmad as cited in ibid.

<sup>41</sup>See the *fatwa* given by Saiyid Alwi b. Tahir Al-Haddad, the former Muftī of Johore in *Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 53-54.

<sup>42</sup>See al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 340.



these traditions are regarded as weak and cannot be used as arguments. In addition to this, Anas b. Mālik himself denied that he narrated that the Prophet recited the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer until he passed away. This is clearly shown by the tradition narrated by al-Khaṭīb that ʿĀṣim b. Sulaimān said to Anas: "The people claimed that the Prophet never left the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer." Anas replied: "They lie, for the Prophet only recited the *qunūt* for a month asking God to curse a group of the polytheists."<sup>43</sup> In the other tradition narrated by Ibn Khuzaymah on the authority of Saʿīd and Qatādah, Anas reportedly said: "The Prophet never recited the *qunūt* except to pray for a group of people or to ask God to curse a group of people."<sup>44</sup> As there is a contradiction between the traditions narrated by the same person, they should not be used as arguments.<sup>45</sup>

- b. The third tradition narrated by al-Hasan and Sufyān is also unacceptable as there is a person in the chain of narrators whose name is ʿAmr b. ʿUbayd, who was identified by the traditionists, such as Aḥmad, al-Nasāʾī and Ibn Ḥibbān, as a deceiver, a fabricator of traditions and a leader of the Qadariyyah *madhhab*. This tradition therefore dropped to the status of weak and cannot be used in argumentation.<sup>46</sup>
- c. The fourth and fifth traditions which mention that the Rightly Guided Caliphs, recited the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer, even though they are regarded as sound traditions, are still questionable as many other sound traditions indicate otherwise,<sup>47</sup> such as these few traditions: Abū Mālik al-Ashjaʿī said to his father: "O my father, you have prayed behind the Messenger of God, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthmān, and behind ʿAlī in Kūfah for a period about five years. Did

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<sup>43</sup>See *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 340. This tradition is also narrated by al-Bukhārī with a slightly different version. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Jumʿah," 947.

<sup>44</sup>See *ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 340.

<sup>45</sup>A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 133-134.

<sup>46</sup>A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 134.

<sup>47</sup>*Ibid.*, vol. 1, pp. 134-135.

they recite the *qunūt* in the Fajr prayer? His father replied: "Beware o my son, it is an innovation."<sup>48</sup> It is also narrated that Sa'īd b. Jubayr said: "I bear witness that I heard Ibn 'Abbās said: 'Indeed, the recitation of *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer is an innovation (*bid'ah*)'"<sup>49</sup> Abū Mijlaz said: "I prayed the Ṣubḥ prayer behind Ibn 'Umar and he did not recite the *qunūt*. I said to him, I did not see you recite the *qunūt*. He replied: 'I do not know that from anyone of the Companions.'"<sup>50</sup>

- d. The last tradition, which mentions that twenty eight of the Companions who participated in the battle of Badr recited the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer, is also unacceptable as this tradition has been regarded as weak by many traditionists including the great traditionist, Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, as stated in his book *Talkhīṣ al-Khabīr*.<sup>51</sup>

The reformists furthermore assert, quoting the words of Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah in his *Zād al-Ma'ād*, that it is impossible that the Prophet recited the *qunūt* daily in the Ṣubḥ prayer until he passed away, for if it was true, it would have been known by the whole *ummah*, and it would have been narrated by all the Companions in a sound way, just as in the matter of the number of obligatory prayers, the number of *rak'ahs* in each prayer, etc. However, as a matter of fact, such a recitation of the *qunūt* has not been narrated through authentic tradition, and was even regarded as innovation by many Companions.<sup>52</sup>

Having denied such a recitation of *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer, the reformists affirm that according to the *sunnah* of the Prophet, the *qunūt* is recited specifically

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<sup>48</sup>Narrated by al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Mājah and Aḥmad. See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 368; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, "Kitāb Iqāmat al-Ṣalāh wa al-Sunnat fī-hā," 1231; *al-Musnad*, "Musnad al-Makiyīn," 15, 317.

<sup>49</sup>Narrated by al-Dāraquṭnī as cited in Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Zād al-Ma'ād Fī Hady Khayr al-'Ibād* (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafāal-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 69.

<sup>50</sup>Narrated by al-Bayhaqī as cited in *ibid*.

<sup>51</sup>A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 135.

<sup>52</sup>Hashim A. Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., p. 13; see also Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 69.

at two times, namely, during a calamity (*nāzilah*) and in the *witr* prayer. Regarding the first, the reformists assert that the *qunūt* is recited during a calamity or fatality such as during war, when being tyrannized by the enemy, and during states of drought, epidemic, starvation and plight. In these situations the *qunūt* should be recited in all obligatory prayers, and when these calamities disappear, the *qunūt* is no longer recited.<sup>53</sup> A lot of traditions are recorded regarding this. For instance, al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that Anas said:

"The Prophet sent seventy men, called al-Qurrā' for some purpose. The two groups of Bani Sulaym called Rī'l and Dhakwān appeared to them near a well called Bi'r Ma'ūnah. The people (i.e. al-Qurrā') said: 'By Allah, we have not come to harm you, but we are passing by you on our way to do something for the Prophet.' But they (the infidels) killed them (the Qurrā'). The Prophet therefore invoked evil upon them for a month during the morning (*al-ghadāh*) prayer. That was the beginning of the *qunut* and we never used to recite the *qunūt* before that."<sup>54</sup>

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that Abū Hurayrah said:

"Whenever the the Messenger of God lifted his head from the bowing in the last *rak'ah* he used to say: 'O God, save 'Ayyāsh b. Abī Rabī'ah. O God, save Salamah b. Hishām. O God, save al-Walid b. al-Walid. O God, save the weak faithful believers. O God, be hard on the tribes of Muḍar and send (famine) years on them like the (famine) years of (Prophet) Joseph.' The Prophet further said, 'O God, forgive the tribes of Ghifār and save the tribes of Aslam.' Ibn Abū al-Zinād said: The *qunut* used to be recited by the Prophet in the Fajr prayer."<sup>55</sup>

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim also narrate that Anas and al-Barā' said that the Messenger of God used to recite the *qunūt* in the Fajr and Maghrib prayers.<sup>56</sup> Abū Dāwūd and Aḥmad narrate that 'Abd Allāh b. 'Abbās said:

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<sup>53</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasulullah*, op.cit., p. 87-88; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., p. 13; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 136; idem, *Pengajaran Shalat*, pp. 335-340.

<sup>54</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Maghāzī," 3,779; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Masājid wa Mawāḍi' al-Ṣalāh," 1,086 -1,089 with slightly different version.

<sup>55</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Jum'ah," 951; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Masājid wa Mawāḍi' al-Ṣalāh," 1083.

<sup>56</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Adhān," 756; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Masājid wa Mawāḍi' al-Ṣalāh," 1094.

"The Messenger of God recited the *qunut* daily for a month in the noon, afternoon, sunset, night and morning prayers. After he said 'God has heard the one who praises Him' in the last *rak'ah*, he invoked a curse on some clans of Banū Sulaym, Ri'l, Dhakwān and 'Uṣayyah, and those who were standing behind him said: 'Amen.'"<sup>57</sup>

Based on these traditions, the reformists affirm that the *qunūt* is to be recited particularly during a calamity and is to be omitted when it disappears. The Prophet did not specify only the Ṣubḥ prayer to recite such a *qunūt*, but he used to do so in the Ṣubḥ prayer as this time has its own significance as described by the Qur'ān: (17: 78): "And recite the Qur'ān in the Fajr (prayer). Verily, the recitation of the Qur'ān in the Fajr is ever witnessed." The *fajr* time is also described by the traditions as the time of prayer being answered, the time that is witnessed by the Angels of the night and the Angels of the day, and so on.<sup>58</sup> Concerning the text of the *qunūt*, they maintain that there is no specific text to be recited, provided that it is recited in Arabic, and that it depends on the situation and necessities.<sup>59</sup>

The reformists further argue that the word *qunūt* denotes several meanings: obedience and humility; standing and praying silently in the prayer; to keep silence when listening to the recitation of an *imām*; and to lengthen the standing in the prayer by reciting some supplication.<sup>60</sup> These are among the meanings which can be extracted from the word *qunūt* mentioned several times in the Qur'ān, such as these verses: "...To Him belongs all that is in the heavens and on the earth, and all surrender with obedience (*qānitūn*) to Him" (Q: 2: 116); "And stand before God with obedience (*qānitīn*)" (Q: 2: 238); "Is one who is obedient (*qānit*) to God, prostrating himself or standing during the hours of the night, fearing the Hereafter and hoping for the Mercy his Lord (like one who disbelieves?)" (Q: 39:9). If these meanings are considered, the traditions narrated by Anas b. Mālik propounded by the traditionalists

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<sup>57</sup>See *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 1,231; *al-Musnad*, "Musnad Banī Hāshim," 2,610.

<sup>58</sup>A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 136.

<sup>59</sup>A. Hassan, *Pengajaran Shalat*, op.cit., p. 335.

<sup>60</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasulullah*, op.cit., pp. 87-88.

to base their standpoint could be accepted when the *qunūt* is interpreted as standing obediently lengthening the recitations in the prayer. This is the most suitable meaning for these traditions as these traditions do not mention any specific text for the *qunūt*.<sup>61</sup>

There is an opinion among the reformists that al-Shāfiʿī himself omitted such a *qunūt* after he agreed with Abū Ḥanīfah's *ijtihād* that there is no *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer. They deny the traditionalists' opinion that al-Shāfiʿī omitted the *qunūt* during his visit to Abū Ḥanīfah's tomb to show his respect for the *ijtihād* of Abū Ḥanīfah.<sup>62</sup> On this issue, the reformists quote the words of al-Shāʿrānī, the friend and the great student of al-Shāfiʿī, in his *al-Mizān al-Kubrā*: "Al-Shāfiʿī's omission of the *qunūt* during his visit to Abū Ḥanīfah's tomb was as a result of an agreement in their *ijtihād* that occurred at the time. That was regarded as one of the great miracles (*al-karāmāt al-jalīlah*) of Abū Ḥanīfah."<sup>63</sup> They conclude that, as a matter of fact, at the beginning, al-Shāfiʿī did recite the *qunūt* in the Ṣubḥ prayer, but that he omitted it in the later part of his life. The traditionalists, however, perceive al-Shāʿrānī's viewpoint as strange, for this fact was never known to any other jurists of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* and hence, is rejected.

Regarding the text of the *qunūt* which is referred to in the tradition narrated by Abū Hurayrah on the authority of al-Ḥākim, the reformists state that this tradition is unacceptable as there is a man in the chain of narrators whose name is ʿAbd Allāh b. Saʿīd al-Maqburī who was identified by the traditionalists as an unreliable person. This text, however, appears to be narrated authentically in another tradition concerning the *qunūt* in the *witr* prayer. This tradition is narrated by *Aṣḥāb al-Sunan* and Aḥmad from the Prophet's grandson al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī, who said:

"The messenger of God taught me some words that I say during the *witr*. They are: 'O God, guide me with those You have guided, and deliver me with those You have delivered, and take me into Your charge with those You have taken

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<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

<sup>62</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., p. 233-235.

<sup>63</sup>Al-Shāʿrānī, *al-Mizān al-Kubrā* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, n. d.) vol. 1, p. 60.

into Your charge, and bless me in what You have given, and guard me from the evil of what You have decreed. You are the One who decrees, and there is no decree for You. He whom You befriend is not humbled. You are the Glorious, our Lord, and the Exalted. Peace be upon the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>64</sup>

Therefore, the reformists affirm that such a recitation of *qunūt* is to be recited in the witr prayer, not in the Ṣubḥ prayer.

In the Malaysian context, the traditionalists will perform a prostration of forgetfulness (*sujūd sahw*) before the *salām* when praying behind a reformist *imām* as the *qunūt* will have been omitted. And if the reformists pray behind a traditionalist *imām*, they do not raise their hands nor pronounce *āmīn* (amen) when the *qunūt* is being recited, but keep silent or recite the prayer of *īʿtidāl* until the recitation of *qunūt* ends. Some reformists denounce the traditionalists who perform a prostration of forgetfulness as they are going against the *imām* who does not do so. This is because, according to them, following the *imām* is obligatory, while the recitation of *qunūt* is only recommended. In return, the traditionalists denounce the reformists who do not raise their hands and pronounce 'Amen' when the *imām* is reciting the *qunūt*, for they are also going against the *imām* and the reward of following the *imām* might not be rewarded to them. However, there are many reformists and traditionalists who hold that there is an excuse when following an *imām* of a different *madhhab*, and that the follower should follow the *imām* whether he recites the *qunūt* or not.

### ***Dhikr* (Remembrance) and *Duʿāʾ* (Supplication) After The Prayer**

Generally, the traditionalists and the reformists agree that the recitation of certain *dhikrs* (remembrances) and *duʿāʾs* (supplications) after the prayer is recommended, and this is proved by many authentic traditions which indicate that the Prophet recited some *dhikrs* and *duʿāʾs* after every obligatory prayer. However, they disagree on the manner of the *dhikrs* and *duʿāʾs* that should be recited after the congregational

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<sup>64</sup>Narrated by *Aṣḥāb al-Sunan* and Aḥmad, as quoted in Sayyid Sābiq, *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 36-37.



prayer. The traditionalists and the reformists have their own way of reciting the *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* : the traditionalists recite it in unison with raised voice, while the reformists recite it individually and inaudibly.

With regard to the traditionalists' manner of recitation, after the congregational prayer finishes, the *imām* who leads the recitation starts to chant the specific *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* followed by all the *ma'mūms* (the followers) raising their voice in a particular rhythm. Among the *dhikrs* recited are:<sup>65</sup> the *istighfār* (begging forgiveness from God) which is read three times:

"*Astaghfiru-llāh al-ʿAzīm alladhī lā ilāha illā huwa al-ḥayy al-qayyūm wa atūbu ilaih* (I beg forgiveness from God the Great, there is no god but He, the Ever Living, the Sustainer and I turn to Him with repentance)."

After the *Ṣubḥ* and *Maghrib* prayers, the first *dhikr* recited is:

"*Lā ilāha illa Allāh waḥdahū lā sharīka-lah la-hu al-mulk wa la-hu al-ḥamd yuḥyī wa yumīt wa-huwa ʿalā kulli shayʿin qadīr* (There is no god but God, the One and has no associate, to Him belongs the dominion and to Him belongs the praise, He gives life and He causes death, and He is able to do all things)."  
(This *dhikr* is recited ten times).

The next *dhikr* is:

"*Allāhumma anta al-Salām, wa min-ka al-salām, fa-ḥayyi-nā rabba-nā bi-al-salām, wa-adkhil-nā al-jannat dār al-salām, tabārakta yā dha al-jalāl wa al-ikrām* (O God, you are Peace, and from you peace comes. Give us life, O Lord, in peace, and place us in the Paradise of The Peace, blessed are You, O Possessor of Glory and Honour)."

Afterwards, *sūrat al-Fātiḥah* is recited once; while *Sūrat al-Ikhlās*, *Sūrat al-Falaq* and *Sūrat al-Nās* are recited three times. *Āyat al-Kursī* (Q: 2: 255) and verse 3: 18 of the Qur'ān which begins with "*Shahida Allāh anna-hu lā ilāha illa huwa...*" are recited next followed by the chanting of *tasbīḥ*, *taḥmīd* and *takbīr* 33 times each. They then chant the *dhikr munājāt* followed by *tahlīl* for up to a hundred times. The *imām* then recites a *du'ā* and the *ma'mūms* say 'Amen' at every pause of the *imām*. At the end

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<sup>65</sup>See for example, *Panduan Wirid Dan Doa Selepas Sembahyang* (Kuala Lumpur: YADIM, 1990); see also, Daud Fatani, *Munyat al-Muṣallī*, op.cit., pp. 20-21; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Wishāḥ al-Afrāḥ*, pp. 53-55.

of the *du'ā'* the *imām* utters "*al-Fātiḥah*" which indicates that all should recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* once again hoping that with the blessing of this *sūrah*, their *du'ā'* will be answered.<sup>66</sup> The *imām* then recites the *du'ā'* once more, but this time the *du'ā'* is shorter than the previous one, and the *ma'mūms* again say 'Amen'. After the *du'ā'* ends the *imām* pronounces "*taqabbal Allāh min-kum* (may God accept from you all)," and the *ma'mūms* reply in chorus saying "*min-nā wa min-kum, taqabbal yā Karīm* (from us and from you, O Most Beneficent please accept)." Afterwards, they shake hands with each other and utter *al-ṣalāt 'ala al-Nabī* inaudibly. In many places in the southern states of the Malay Peninsula, the *imām* and *ma'mūms* stand up to form a circle, chanting the *al-ṣalāt 'ala al-Nabī* together, and then, the first person on the right of the *imām* begins the handshake with the *imām* first and his fellows next. The next person then continues, and this practice ends after everyone has shaken hands with each other. The recitation of these *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* usually takes longer than the prayer itself.

Reciting the *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* in that manner seems very familiar in the Malay Muslim world, and it is regarded as an integral part of the congregational prayer. It seems somewhat strange if the congregational prayer is not followed by such a practice, and in fact, the ability to lead the *ma'mūms* to recite the *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* in such a manner is regarded as an important prerequisite for becoming an *imām*. However, such a method of *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* is not prescribed in any traditional *fiqh* books taught in the Malay world nor by any jurist of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, and it is not known who invented or introduced such a practice in the Malay world.

In spite of the fact that such a manner of reciting *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* is not prescribed in any *fiqh* books or by any jurists, the traditionalists base this deeply rooted practice on various arguments and reasons:<sup>67</sup>

- (i) The traditionalists maintain that reciting *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* in a raised voice was

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<sup>66</sup>*Panduan Wirid dan Doa Selepas Sembahyang*, op.cit., p. 13.

<sup>67</sup>Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Ilmi, 1996), pp. 131 onwards.

a normal practice at the time of the Prophet and his Companions as indicated in many traditions. For example, al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate on the authority of Abū Ma'bad that he said:

"Ibn 'Abbās told me, 'In the lifetime of the Prophet it was a custom to recite *dhikr* and *du'ā*' aloud after the compulsory congregational prayers.' Ibn 'Abbās further said, 'When I heard the *dhikr*, I would recognize that the compulsory congregational prayer had ended.'"<sup>68</sup>

The Prophet also used to recite certain *dhikrs* and *du'ā*'s loudly which were heard by his Companions as stated in many other traditions. It is narrated on the authority of Thawbān that he said:

"When the Messenger of God finished his prayer, he begged forgiveness three times and said, '*Allāhumma anta al-Salām wa min-ka al-salām tabārak-ta yā dha al-Jalāl wa al-Ikrām* (O God, You are Peace, and peace comes from You, blessed are You, O Possessor of Glory and Honour).'"<sup>69</sup>

Al-Bukhārī and Muslim also narrated from Warrād, the scribe of al-Mughīrah b. Shu'bah, that he said:

"Once al-Mughīrah dictated to me in a letter addressed to Mu'āwiyah that the Prophet used to say after every compulsory prayer, '*Lā ilāha ila-Allāh waḥdahū lā sharīka lah, la-hu al-mulk wa-la-hu al-ḥamd, wa-huwa 'alā kulli shay'in qadīr. Allāhumma lā mānā li-mā āṭait, wa lā muftī li-mā mandā ta, wa lā yanfa'u dhā al-jadd min-ka al-jadd*. (There is no god but God, and He has no partner, and for Him is the Kingdom and all the praises are for Him and He is Omnipotent. O God, nobody can hold back what you give and nobody can give what You hold back. Hard efforts by anyone for anything cannot benefit one against Your Will).'"<sup>70</sup>

These traditions show that reciting *dhikrs* and *du'ā*'s loudly is a *sunnah* of the Prophet which should not be excluded. Even though the traditions do not indicate that the Prophet and his Companions recited *dhikrs* and *du'ā*'s together after the prayer, this

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<sup>68</sup>As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* op.cit., pp.131. See also *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Adhān," 796; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Masājīd wa Mawāḍi' al-Ṣalāh," 989

<sup>69</sup>As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* op.cit., pp.132. This tradition is narrated by most traditionists except al-Bukhārī. See for example, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Masājīd wa Mawāḍi' al-Ṣalāh," 931; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 276; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 1,292.

<sup>70</sup>As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* op.cit., pp.132. See also *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Da'awāt," 5,855; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Masājīd wa Mawāḍi' al-Ṣalāh," 933.

is hinted by many other traditions as stated in the following arguments:

(ii) The traditionalists assert that assembly together for the remembrance of God by any manner is a good practice that is loved by the Angels as explained in many Prophetic traditions. For instance, al-Bukhārī narrates on the authority of Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said:

"God has Angels who move around on the roads looking for those who remember God (*ahl al-dhikr*). When they find people who are remembering God, they call each other saying, 'Come to your pursuit.'" He added: "Then the Angels encircle them with their wings up to the nearest heaven (*al-samā' al-dunyā*)." He added, "Their Lord asks the Angels - though He knows better than them - 'What do My servants say?' The Angels reply, 'They say: *Subḥāna-Allah, Allāhu-Akbar*, and *al-ḥamdu-li-Allah*.' God then says, 'Have they seen Me?' The Angels reply, 'No! By God, they haven't seen You.' God says, 'How would it have been if they saw Me?' The Angels reply, 'If they saw You, they would worship You more devoutly and remember Your Glory more deeply, and declare Your freedom from any resemblance to anything more often....'"<sup>71</sup>

Muslim narrates from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said:

"God has many moving Angels who look for the gatherings of the remembrance of God (*majālis al-dhikr*). When the Angels find a gathering filled with the remembrance of God they sit together with them, and they surround the people with their wings up to the nearest heaven..."<sup>72</sup>

Muslim also narrates on the authority of Abū Hurayrah and Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī that the Prophet said:

"The Angels will surround those who are sitting together remembering God, mercy will cover them, tranquility will descend upon them, and God will mention them in the presence of those near Him."<sup>73</sup>

It is also narrated from Abū Hurayrah that the Prophet said:

"...Those persons who assemble in one of the houses of God, (and) recite the Book of God, (and) learn and teach the Qur'ān among themselves, will have

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<sup>71</sup>As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* op.cit., pp.133. See also *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Da'awāt," 5,929.

<sup>72</sup>As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* op.cit., pp.133. See also *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Du'ā' wa al-Tawbah wa al-Istighfār," 4,854

<sup>73</sup>As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* op.cit., pp.134. See also *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Du'ā' wa al-Tawbah wa al-Istighfār," 4,868

tranquillity descend upon them, mercy will cover them, the Angels will surround them, and God will mention them in the presence of those near Him...”<sup>74</sup>

Based on these traditions, the traditionalists sum up that reciting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* loudly and en masse after a congregational prayer is one of the ways to fulfill what is meant by the traditions.

(iii) They assert that reciting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* together after the congregational prayer is regarded by many scholars as good practice for it gives many benefits to those who participate in the gathering, just as the benefits of the congregational prayer, which is regarded as a symbol of solidarity of the *ummah*. It is absurd, they claim, if Muslims perform their prayer in congregation but after the prayer they recite the *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* individually, for it does not indicate unity. In addition to that, reciting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* together is thought to be a good method for children to learn all of the *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* after the prayer. All the benefits of this practice indicate that this practice is good and blessed by God, for what is considered good by Muslims is also good in the perception of God. This principle is explained by the Prophet in a tradition narrated by Aḥmad: “What is perceived by the Muslims as good, is good in the perspective of God. And what is perceived by the Muslims as bad, is bad in the perspective of God.”<sup>75</sup>

(iv) Finally, some traditionalists maintain that even if the Prophet and his Companions never recited *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* together after the congregational prayer, it does not mean that doing this is prohibited as there is no specific prohibition on this matter. They affirm that reciting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* is included in the matter of general *‘ibādah* (*‘ibādah muṭlaqah*) whose method of accomplishment is not prescribed by Islamic law, and it is up to Muslims to decide how to perform it.

For the reformists, chanting *dhikrs* and *du‘ā’s* loudly and together after the

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<sup>74</sup>As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* op.cit., pp.134. See also *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, “Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Du‘ā’ wa al-Tawbah wa al-Istighfār,” 4,867.

<sup>75</sup>As cited in Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?* op.cit., pp.135. See also *al-Musnad*, “Musnad al-Mukthirīn min al-Ṣaḥābah,” 3,418.



congregational prayer is an additional innovation (*bid'ah idāfiyyah*) which was not known in the time of the Prophet, his Companions, and the Pious Forefathers, and is not recognized by any jurists. They affirm that the proper manner to recite *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* after the prayer is individually and inaudibly, and they claim that this was the manner that the Prophet used to do.<sup>76</sup> They also cite the viewpoints of some jurists, such as al-Shāṭibī, that regular recitation of *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* after the prayer together with raised voices is an innovation which should be abandoned.<sup>77</sup>

The reformists denounce the traditionalists' way, saying that reciting the *dhikrs* and *du'ā's* together with raised voices is improper and against the Qur'ānic teaching regarding the *ādāb* (manner) of reciting *dhikrs* and *du'ā's*. The Qur'ān states: "Invoke your Lord with humility and in secret. He does not like the aggressors" (7: 55); "And remember your Lord within yourself, humbly and with fear without loudness in words, in the mornings, and in the afternoons and do not be of those who are neglectful" (7: 205). These two verses clearly show that *dhikr* and *du'ā'* should be done inaudibly and individually, and those who recite them with loudness and together could be labelled as aggressors.

The reformists further assert that the Prophet used to admonish his Companions who did *dhikr* loudly as stated in many traditions. For example, al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate from Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī that he said:

"The Prophet started ascending a high place or hill, and a man ascended it and shouted in a loud voice, '*Lā ilāha illa Allah wa-Allahu Akbar* (there is no god but God, God is the Greatest).' At the time, the Prophet was riding his mule. The Prophet then said to the man, 'You are not calling upon a deaf or absent one.'"<sup>78</sup>

Muslim and al-Tirmidhī narrated that Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī said:

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<sup>76</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Sembahyang Rasulullah*, op.cit., p. 167; Abdullah al-Qari, *Wirid Sembahyang Nabi* (Kota Bharu: Pustaka ASA, 1987), pp. 12-13; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 22 & 222.

<sup>77</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., p. 22; Abdullah al-Qari, *Wirid Sembahyang Nabi*, op.cit., p. 15; see also, al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 237.

<sup>78</sup>See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Dā' awāt," 5,930; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Dū'ā' wa al-Tawbat wa al-Istighfār," 4875.



"We were travelling with the Prophet when the people started to raise their voices pronouncing the *takbīr*. The Prophet then said: 'O people, lower your voices, for you are not calling upon a deaf or an absent one, but you are calling upon the All-Hearer and the Close, and He is with you.'" In the narration of Aḥmad, it is added: "Indeed, He who you are calling upon is closer to everyone of you than the neck of your riding camel."<sup>79</sup>

Regarding the traditionalists' arguments, the reformists' answers can be simplified as follows:

(i) Concerning the account of Ibn ʿAbbās that it was a custom in the lifetime of the Prophet to recite *dhikrs* loudly after the congregational prayers, the reformists assert that the narrator of this tradition, i.e. Abū Maʿbad, the servant of Ibn ʿAbbās, had denied this as stated twice in the narration of Muslim:

(It is related) From ʿAmr that he said: "Abū Maʿbad told me - and then he denied that - from Ibn ʿAbbās who said, 'We did not know the end of the prayer of the Prophet except by the pronouncing of the *takbīr*.'"<sup>80</sup>

(It is related) From ʿAmr b. Dīnār, from Abū Maʿbad the servant of Ibn ʿAbbās, that he narrated from Ibn ʿAbbās that he said: "We did not know the end of the prayer of the Prophet except by the pronouncing of the *takbīr*." ʿAmr said: "I told this to Abū Maʿbad but he denied it and said: 'I did not tell you that.'" ʿAmr said: "He really told me that before."<sup>81</sup>

The reformists hold that insomuch as the narrator of this tradition had denied what is narrated from him, it cannot therefore be judged as an authoritative argument even if it is narrated through a sound channel.

With respect to the traditions mentioning that the Prophet recited certain *dhikrs* and *duʿā's* loudly after the prayer, the reformists assert that these traditions should be understood as meaning that this practice is only recommended for the *imām* for the purpose of teaching his *ma'mūms*, and not to be practiced continuously. This is the agreed point of view among the jurists as stated by al-Nawawī.<sup>82</sup> Al-Shāfiʿī

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<sup>79</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Duʿā' wa al-Tawbat wa al-Istighfār," 4,873; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Daʿawāt," 3,296; *al-Musnad*, "Musnad al-Kūfiyīn," 18,774.

<sup>80</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Masājīd wa Mawāḍf al-Ṣalāh," 1,316.

<sup>81</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Masājīd wa Mawāḍf al-Ṣalāh," 1,317.

<sup>82</sup>Al-Nawawī, *al-Minhāj Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, op.cit., vol. 5, p. 86.

himself bases his viewpoint on these traditions, holding that it is recommended for the *imām* only to pronounce the *dhikrs* and *duʿā's* loudly for a short time in order to let the *ma'mūms* know how *dhikrs* should be done. The reformists quote al-Shāfiʿī's words in his *al-Umm*:

"I prefer, for the *imām* and the *ma'mūm*, to recite the *dhikr* inaudibly after the prayer is finished, except for the *imām* who is obliged to teach (the *ma'mūm*), and he should recite it audibly until the *ma'mūm* knows it, and then he should recite it inaudibly..."<sup>83</sup>

The reformists argue that what is practised by the traditionalists is completely different from what is prescribed by al-Shāfiʿī, and, at this point, they criticize the traditionalists' attitude who proudly acknowledge that they belong to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* but incline to follow their own judgement and ignore their master's *ijtihād*.

(ii) With regard to the traditionalists' second argument which is based on the traditions which mention that the Angels like gatherings for the remembrance of God, the reformists affirm that these traditions do not prove anything in this issue as they do not indicate that the *dhikr* is to be recited loudly and together. They maintain that the gathering of *dhikr* stated in the traditions refers to any sort of activities that encourage people to remember God, provided that they do not contradict the principles laid down by the *sharʿah*.

(iii) The traditionalists' third argument, which mentions that reciting *dhikr* and *duʿā* loudly and together is perceived as good by many scholars, is unacceptable to the reformists. The reasons are simple: that the Prophet and his Companions who knew better about the religion never did this; the methods of *ʿibādah* were completely taught by the Prophet; and, there is no room for *ijtihād* in the realm of *ʿibādah*. Therefore, the tradition narrated by Aḥmad which mentions that what is perceived by the Muslims as good is good in the perspective of God and so on is not applicable in the matters of *ʿibādah*, and is only applicable to mundane activities, and this must be decided by a *mujtahid* or competent scholar, not by any ordinary Muslim.

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<sup>83</sup>Al-Shāfiʿī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 220-221.

(iv) The traditionalists' last argument, which mentions that there is no specific prohibition from the Prophet to recite the *dhikr* and *du'ā'* loudly and together after the prayer, is considered by the reformists as misleading and even harmful to the Islamic teachings. To justify something by judging the absence of prohibition from the *Shāri'* is rejected, for if it is accepted, anyone can abuse the Islamic teachings, for example by claiming that he can pray *Zuhr* in five or ten or hundred *rak'ahs*, or he can pray *'Aṣr* in one *rak'ah*, etc, as there is no specific prohibition from God or the Prophet on these matters. At this point, the reformists admonish the traditionalists for being too excessive in using logic without thinking about the consequences.

They conclude, not only in this particular issue but all issues pertaining to matters of *'ibādah*, that the Prophet has shown complete guidance in the realm of *'ibādah*, both the form and the manner to be followed by the *ummah* and this leaves no room for any type of addition or reduction.<sup>84</sup> This principle is based on the Prophet's saying: "Whoever does a deed which is not prescribed by our commandment on it, that (deed) is rejected."<sup>85</sup> They also mention some principles in the science of jurisprudence regarding matters of *'ibādah*, such as: "The principle in the matter of *'ibādah* is suspending (the judgement) and following (the example) (*al-aṣl fī al-'ibādah al-tawqīf wa al-ittibā'*)"; and "the principle in the matter of *'ibādah* is void unless there is an evident of commandment on it (*al-aṣl fī al-'ibādah al-buṭlān ḥattā yaqūmu dalīl 'alā al-amr*)."<sup>86</sup>

The reformists further say that it is better and sufficient to follow the Prophet's original way rather than choose a new innovated way, for the Prophet's way is the safest, purest and doubtless way, while the new way is doubtful and could lead to error. The Prophet said: "Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does

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<sup>84</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *'Ibādāt Rasul Allāh*, op.cit., p. 166.

<sup>85</sup>Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣulḥ," 2,499; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Aqḍiyah," 3243.

<sup>86</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *'Ibādāt Rasul Allāh*, op.cit., pp. 168-169.

not make you doubt.”<sup>87</sup>

## Matters Concerning The Friday Congregational Prayer

### Doing The *Adhān* Twice

Regarding this issue, the traditionalists and the reformists dispute whether the *adhān* should be done once or twice before the beginning of the *khuṭbah* (sermon). For the traditionalists who base their viewpoint on the judgement determined by the jurists of the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab*, the *adhān* is recommended to be done twice: the first is done when the time of midday begins; and the second is done after the *imām* or *khāṭib* (preacher) ascends the pulpit and pronounces the *taslīm* to the *ma’mūms*. The reformists assert that the *adhān* is done once, i.e. when the *imām* or *khāṭib* seats himself at the pulpit after greeting the *ma’mūms* with the *taslīm*, and this is the opinion of the majority of the jurists.

The traditionalists base their viewpoint on the practice of the third Caliph ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān who added to the one initial *adhān* in order to enable the people to get ready for the Friday prayer. This account is based on the traditions narrated by al-Bukhārī and others that al-Sā’ib b. Yazīd said:

“‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān introduced the second *adhān* on Fridays when the number of the people in the mosque increased. Previously the *adhān* on Fridays used to be pronounced only after the *imām* had taken his seat (on the pulpit).”<sup>88</sup>

Al-Sā’ib b. Yazīd also narrated:

“In the lifetime of the Prophet, Abū Bakr and ‘Umar, the *adhān* for the Friday prayer used to be pronounced when the *imām* sat on the pulpit. But during the Caliphate of ‘Uthmān when the Muslims increased in number, a third<sup>89</sup> *adhān*

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<sup>87</sup>See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, “Kitāb Ṣifat al-Qiyāmat wa al-Raqā’iq wa al-Warā’,” 2,442; *Sunan al-Nasā’ī*, “Kitāb al-Ashribah,” 5,615; *al-Musnad*, “Musnad Ahl al-Bait,” 1,630.

<sup>88</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, “Kitāb al-Jum‘ah,” 864; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, “Kitāb al-Jum‘ah,” 474.

<sup>89</sup>The third *adhān* referred to here is the first one done. It is regarded as the third one because it is an addition to the original *adhān* and the *iqāmah* (the final call prior to the beginning of the prayer) which  
(continued...)

at al-Zawrā' was added. Abū 'Abd Allāh said, 'al-Zawrā' is a place in the market of Madīnah.'"<sup>90</sup>

"The person who increased the number of *adhāns* for the Friday prayers to three was 'Uthmān b. 'Affān and it was when the number of the (Muslim) people of Madinah had increased. In the lifetime of the Prophet there was only one *mu'adhdhin* and the *adhān* used to be pronounced only after the *imām* had taken his seat (i.e. on the pulpit)."<sup>91</sup>

These traditions, according to the traditionalists, prove that the *adhān* should be done twice especially in an area with a high population of Muslims. They assert that the *adhān* was not done twice in the Prophet's time and in the time of the first two Caliphs after him as the Muslim population in Madīnah was still small, and it was sufficient to do the *adhān* over the mosque's door. When the population increased and the people were busy with their mundane business, 'Uthman perceived that another *adhān* was needed to let people know that the time for Friday prayer was about to begin and to remind them that the *khuṭbah* was about to be delivered, so that they could prepare themselves to join in the congregation. This *adhān*, the traditionalists maintain, was commanded by 'Uthman and agreed by the rest of the Companions and has been continuously practiced after that. There was, therefore, a silent consensus (*ijmā' sukūti*) among the Companions which should not be disputed by anybody.

The reformists affirm, based on the same proofs used by the traditionalists, that even if 'Uthmān had instituted the second *adhān* for certain reasons, the practice in the time of the Prophet is more valid and undisputable.<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, they argue, the *adhān* allegedly introduced by 'Uthman is questionable for various reasons: Firstly, the account by al-Sā'ib b. Yazīd that 'Uthmān was the first person to introduce the second *adhān* contradicts the account of 'Aṭā', (as quoted by al-Shāfi'ī in his *al-*

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<sup>89</sup>(...continued)

is known as the second *adhān*. See Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 158.

<sup>90</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Jum'ah," 861; *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, "Kitāb al-Jum'ah," 1375.

<sup>91</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Jum'ah," 862; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 919.

<sup>92</sup>Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Penebas Bid'ah*, op.cit., pp. 20-21; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 897-898; Abdullah al-Qari, *Revolusi Mental Ahli Ibadah*, op.cit., pp. 5-6, 74-75.

*Umm*,<sup>93</sup>) who denied the fact and stated that Mu'āwiyah b. Abī Sufyān was the first person to introduce the second *adhān*.<sup>94</sup> Secondly, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar, a great Companion of the Prophet, regarded the second *adhān* as *bid'ah*, as stated by Wakfī, al-Shāfi'ī's master: "Hishām b. Al-Ghār reported that he asked Nāfi' about the first *adhān* of the Friday prayer and he (Nāfi') said, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar said that such an *adhān* is *bid'ah*.'" <sup>95</sup> In the tradition narrated by Ibn Abī Shaybah, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar said: "When the Prophet ascended the pulpit, Bilāl would pronounce the *adhān*. After the Prophet finished his sermon, he (Bilāl) would pronounce the *iqāmah*. The first *adhān* is *bid'ah*."<sup>96</sup>

However, the reformists add, if the account of al-Sāib is accepted notwithstanding the contradiction to the other, the traditionalists' practice nowadays does not match the second *adhān* practised in the time of 'Uthmān for several reasons. For one thing, the *adhān* in the time of 'Uthmān was held at al-Zawrā', the highest place in the market of Madīnah to remind the public who were in the market about the Friday prayer, while the traditionalists do the *adhān* in the mosque which does not reach public places such as those who are in shopping complexes, or their place of work etc. Secondly, the second *adhān* introduced by Uthmān at al-Zawrā' was reportedly done before the beginning of the Friday prayer time, while the traditionalists do the *adhān* at the beginning of the Friday prayer time and chant other recitations such as *Qasidah* before that. Thirdly, there is no account mentioning that in the time of 'Uthmān the people in the mosque prayed two *rak'ahs* for the *sunnah qabliyyah* (the recommended prayer before the Friday prayer) after the first *adhān* was done, while the traditionalists hold that it is recommended to pray two *rak'ahs* immediately after the first *adhān*.

In addition to that, the reformists state that al-Shāfi'ī himself did not

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<sup>93</sup>Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 61.

<sup>94</sup>Abdullah al-Qari, *200 Bid'ah Hari Jumaat*, op.cit., pp. 73-75.

<sup>95</sup>As cited in Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Penebas Bid'ah*, op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>96</sup>Tradition narrated by Ibn Abī Shaybah and Abū Zāhir al-Mukhiṣ, as cited in Abdullah al-Qari, *200 Bid'ah Hari Jumaat*, op.cit., p. 74 and A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 898.



recommend adding the second *adhān* for the Friday prayer but liked it to be done as in the Prophet's time.<sup>97</sup> They cite al-Shāfi'ī's words regarding this issue:

"Trusted scholars told me from al-Zuhrī from al-Sā'ib b. Yazīd, that the *adhān* of the Friday prayer used to be pronounced when the *imam* sat on the pulpit in the time of the Prophet, Abū Bakr and 'Umar. But during the Caliphate of 'Uthmān when the Muslims increased in number, 'Uthmān commanded the second *adhān*, and it was done, and that new state of affairs remained so. 'Aṭā' denied the fact that 'Uthmān introduced that and said, 'It was Mu'āwiyah who invented it,' - God knows best. Whoever it was, I prefer the affair that was done in the time of the Prophet."<sup>98</sup>

At this point, the reformists question the traditionalists' attitude of claiming to be the loyal adherents of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, but they ignore their master's words and choose their own judgement.

Concerning the traditionalists' argument that the addition of the *adhān* was a matter of silent consensus among the Companions in the time of 'Uthmān, the reformists argue that silent consensus is not accepted as an authoritative evidence for al-Shāfi'ī, and this argument is therefore void.<sup>99</sup>

### Two *Rak'ahs* after the First *Adhān* (*Sunnah Qabliyyah*)

It is customary for the traditionalists to perform two *rak'ahs* (known as *sunnah qabliyyah*) immediately after the first *adhān* is done, and they deem it as recommended.<sup>100</sup> They base their viewpoint on the following evidences: Firstly, the traditionalists propound the Prophetic tradition narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from 'Abd Allāh b. Mughaffal al-Muzanī who said:

"The Prophet said: 'There is a prayer between the two *adhāns*. There is a prayer between the two *adhāns*. There is a prayer between the two *adhāns*.'

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<sup>97</sup>Abdullah al-Qari, *200 Bid'ah Hari Jumaat*, op.cit., pp. 74-75; idem, *Revolusi Mental*, op.cit., p. 6.

<sup>98</sup>Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 60-61.

<sup>99</sup>Abdullah al-Qari, *Revolusi Mental*, op.cit., p. 5. On al-Shāfi'ī's rejection of the authority of silent consensus, see for example, al-Shāfi'ī, *Jimā' al-'Ilm* (Beirut:: Dār Qutaybah, 1996), pp. 54-56.

<sup>100</sup>Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Jullāb*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 214;

He then said: 'For the one who wants to pray.'<sup>101</sup>

The traditionalists, quoting al-Nawawī's standpoint, maintain that not only does this tradition denote in general that it is recommended to pray between the two *adhāns* (i.e. the *adhān* and the *iqāmah*) for the regular compulsory prayers, but it is also applicable in the case of the Friday prayer by equating it analogically with the *Ẓuhr* prayer. However, for the Friday prayer, this recommended prayer is done after the first *adhān*, not after the second one, for after the second *adhān* it is the time for listening to the *khuṭbah*.<sup>102</sup>

Secondly, the traditionalists base their argument on another Prophetic tradition which is narrated by Ibn Mājah from Jābir and Abū Hurayrah who said:

"Salīk al-Ghaṭafānī came when the Prophet was delivering the (Friday) *khuṭbah*. The Prophet said to him: 'Did you pray two *raḳ'ahs* before coming here?' He replied: 'No.' The Prophet said: 'Pray two *raḳ'ahs* and make them simple.'"

This tradition, according to the traditionalists, indicates that two *raḳ'ahs* prayer before the Friday prayer is strongly recommended.<sup>103</sup>

The reformists, however, denounce this practice stating that such a prayer is not recommended, and placing it after the first *adhān* is purely an innovation. They maintain that the recommended prayer before the Friday prayer should not be specified after the first *adhān*, but can be done at anytime before the *adhān*. According to several Prophetic traditions,<sup>104</sup> they state, the Companions of the Prophet went to the mosque in the morning and did *i'tikāf*, which included reciting the Qur'ān and remembrance, and doing supererogatory prayers, while waiting for the Friday prayer. This kind of prayer, which is known as *sunnah muṭlaqah*, can be done at any

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<sup>101</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Adhān," 591; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn wa Qaṣru-hā," 1384.

<sup>102</sup> Abu Bakar b. Hassan, *Taman Huraian*, (Penang: Persama Press, no date), pp. 7-10; see also, al-Nawawī, *al-Majmūʿ*, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 9-10.

<sup>103</sup> Abu Bakar b. Hassan, *Taman Huraian*, op.cit., p. 11.

<sup>104</sup> See for instance, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Jumʿah," 1,418; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalāh," 886.

time as agreed by all jurists, and is not limited to any number of *rak'ahs* or any specific time. However, placing two *rak'ahs* as a supererogatory prayer after the first *adhān*, which is also an innovation, is disputable as it was never done by the Prophet, the Companions, or the Pious Forefathers, and was not acknowledged by the leaders of the four *madhhab*s.<sup>105</sup>

The reformists uphold that the traditionalists' first argument, which is based on the Prophet's tradition narrated by 'Abd Allāh b. Mughaffal, is weak for several reasons: firstly, this tradition mentions the supererogatory prayer in general terms (*ijmāl*) and it needs to be clarified. There are many traditions that clarify this, such as the tradition of 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar who said "I preserved from the Prophet ten *rak'ahs* (of supererogatory prayers): two *rak'ahs* before *Ẓuhr*, and two *rak'ahs* after it, two *rak'ahs* after *Maghrib* in his house, two *rak'ahs* after 'Ishā' in his house, and two *rak'ahs* before *Ṣubḥ*."<sup>106</sup> Umm Ḥabibah narrated that the Prophet said: "Whoever does twelve *rak'ahs* of supererogatory prayers during the day and night, a house in the Heaven is built for him: four *rak'ahs* before *Ẓuhr* and two *rak'ahs* after it, two *rak'ahs* after *Maghrib* in his house, two *rak'ahs* after 'Ishā' in his house, and two *rak'ahs* before *Ṣubḥ*."<sup>107</sup> This clarification does not mention any supererogatory prayer before the Friday prayer. Therefore, doing the supererogatory prayers between the *adhān* and the *iqāmah* as suggested in the tradition of 'Abd Allāh b. Mughaffal is only applicable for the regular obligatory prayers. Furthermore, the Prophet had emphasized at the end of this tradition "for the one who wants to pray," which indicates that the prayer between the two *adhāns* is optional (*takhyīr*), and not strongly recommended (*ta'kīd*).<sup>108</sup>

Secondly, equating the Friday prayer with the *Ẓuhr* prayer by using analogy is

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<sup>105</sup>Abdullah al-Qari, *200 Bid'ah Hari Jumaat*, op.cit., pp. 69-72; Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Ta'yīd Tadhkirat Muttabi' al-Sunnah fī al-Radd 'alā al-Qā'il bi-Sunniyat rak'atayn Qabl al-Jum'ah* (Penang: The United Press, 1953), pp. 7-10; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggag Soal Jawab*, op.cit., p. 23.

<sup>106</sup>Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim . See *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Jum'ah," 1109.

<sup>107</sup>Narrated by Muslim and al-Tirmidhī. See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣalah," 380.

<sup>108</sup>Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Ta'yīd Tadhkirat Muttabi' al-Sunnah*, op.cit., p. 10.

void as there is 'no analogy in the matter of *'ibādah*' and 'no analogy in fixing the supererogatory *'ibādah*.'<sup>109</sup> In this case, they cite the words of Abū Shāmah, a great scholar in the Shāfi'i *madhhab* who was also a master of al-Nawawī: "The reason for no supererogatory prayer before it (the Friday prayer) that what is meant by supererogatory prayers are those which are narrated from the Prophet's words or deeds. There is nothing from the Prophet indicating a supererogatory prayer before that, and it is not permitted to use analogy in fixing the prayers."<sup>110</sup>

Thirdly, the reformists hold that adding the first initial *adhān* is an innovation; therefore, fixing the supererogatory prayer after it is also an innovation as this was never practised by the Prophet, the Companions and the pious Forefathers.<sup>111</sup>

Concerning the second tradition where the Prophet asked Salīk al-Ghaṭafānī "did you pray two *rak'ahs* before coming here?", the reformists assert that the phrase "before coming here" is questionable for the following reasons:<sup>112</sup>

(i) This tradition is also narrated by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and the uppermost part of the chain of narrators is similar with Ibn Mājah's, but Muslim does not narrate such a phrase. It is agreed among the scholars that the *Ṣaḥīḥs* are more authoritative and preferable than the *Sunans*.

(ii) Abū Dāwūd also narrates this tradition with a similar chain of narrators as Ibn Majah's, but there is no mention of the phrase "before coming here." According to the degree of authority, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* is more authoritative than *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, and therefore, it cannot be a strong evidence.

(iii) The traditionists and jurists agree that the Prophet's order to Salīk is an order to perform the prayer of salutation (*tahīyyat al-masjid*). They also agree that any other

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<sup>109</sup>Ibid., pp. 8, 15; Abdullah al-Qari, *200 Bid'ah Hari Jumaat*, op.cit., p. 71.

<sup>110</sup>See Muḥammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Risalah Penebas Bid'ah*, op.cit., pp. 24-25; idem, *Ta'yīd Tadhkirat Muttabi'ī al-Sunnah*, op.cit., p. 8; Abū Shāmah, *al-Bā'ith 'alā inkār al-Bid' wa al-Ḥawādith* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Bābī wa-Aulāduh, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 1973), p. 92.

<sup>111</sup>Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Ta'yīd Tadhkirat Muttabi'ī al-Sunnah*, op.cit., pp. 8-9; Abdullah al-Qari, *200 Bid'ah Hari Jumaat*, op.cit., pp. 71-72.

<sup>112</sup>Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Ta'yīd Tadhkirat Muttabi'ī al-Sunnah*, op.cit., pp. 19-20.

supererogatory prayers performed after the *khaṭīb* has sat on the pulpit are not permitted.

(iv) Inasmuch as the tradition narrated by Ibn Mājah contains the addition of the phrase “before coming here” while the one narrated by the others of higher degree does not, it can be categorized as strange or isolated (*shādhah*) and cannot be judged as an authoritative evidence.

The reformists conclude by quoting Ibn al-Qayyim in this matter: “Whoever assumes that the Companions prayed two *rak'ahs* after Bilāl did the *adhān* for Friday prayer, is the most ignorant person about the *sunnah*.”<sup>113</sup>

## Perceptions Regarding *Zakāh* (Almsgiving) of Property

### The Expansion of *Zakāh* Resources

As *zakāh* is a non-ritual form of *‘ibādah*, the discussion regarding this issue in the context of the traditionalists and the reformists’ conflict of thought only revolves around material matters. The most disputed issue concerning the matter of *zakāh* is about the kinds of wealth which are subject to *zakāh*. In the traditional view based on the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab*, there are six particular types of property on which *zakāh* is levied, namely, (i) farm animals (*an‘ām*), i.e. camels, cattle and sheep or goats; (ii) crops (*nabāt*), i.e. grains and fruits that can be stored as food; (iii) cash (*naqd*); (iv) buried treasure (*rikāz*); (v) gold and silver (*ma‘dīn*); (vi) business commodities.<sup>114</sup> Current practice in almost all the states in Malaysia shows that *zakāh* is imposed only on these specific properties.

On the other hand, the reformists’ viewpoint, which is much influenced by the

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<sup>113</sup>Abdullah al-Qari, *200 Bid‘ah Hari Jumaat*, op.cit., pp. 70-71; see also, Ibn al-Qayyim, *Zād al-Mā‘ād*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 118.

<sup>114</sup>Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Jullāb*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 35; Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtādīm*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 88; Muhammad b. Ismaill Daud Fatani, *Maṭla‘ al-Badrayn*, op.cit., p. 55.

ideas of contemporary prominent scholars such as Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī and Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, is that the types of property subject to *zakāh* should not be restricted only to those specific traditional resources, but should be expanded to include other kinds of wealth, taking into account contemporary developments and changes. They affirm that since the institution of *zakāh* has an essential role in society, its sources must also be comprehensive, so that its functions can run effectively. *Zakāh* is considered as an efficient means to solve the problem of poverty in the Muslim community. However, the limited *zakāh* resources which lead to insufficient *zakāh* funds contribute to the failure of achieving this objective. To achieve the objective, the reformists assert, the *zakāh* resources must be expanded to include contemporary resources of wealth. *Zakāh* should not be only imposed on paddy products earned by poor farmers, it must also be imposed on various other plantation products run commercially by rich owners. Fisheries, various industries, shares, wages, salaries or income of professional groups, etc, are also regarded as contemporary resources of wealth.<sup>115</sup>

They maintain that the limitation of *zakāh* resources specified by the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* which is based on the practice in the Prophet's lifetime, is only appropriate for that time, as they were the only resources of wealth available. Times have changed and the resources of wealth have increased in number, and these new resources must also be subject to *zakāh*. For instance, ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb at his time imposed the *zakāh* on honey and horses bred for commercial purposes, as these were among the main sources of wealth at that time. At the present time, they assert, there are many resources which are important sources of wealth, such as shares, industries, wages or professional income, and many other resources, and they must not be exempted from *zakāh*.<sup>116</sup>

The expansion of *zakāh* resources, they maintain, is not a baseless

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<sup>115</sup>Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya* (Kelantan: Pustaka Reka, 1997), pp. 52, 92-93.

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 104-105; Ahmad Ibrahim, *Pentadbiran Undang-undang Islam di Malaysia* (Kuala Lumpur: IKIM, 1997), pp. 641-642.



justification. It is in fact, in harmony with the principles of the *shar'ah*, based on the method of *qiyās* (analogy) and various other principles derived from the principle of *maṣlahah* (common interest).<sup>117</sup> For example, the method of *qiyās* can be used to impose *zakāh* on salary or professional income, i.e. by equating them to the *zakāh* of plantations which requires no condition of *ḥawl* (the period of a year). The shared underlying cause (*'illah*) of them refers to the method of earning, i.e. that they are property earned through labour.<sup>118</sup> The method of *qiyās* can also be used to impose *zakāh* on petroleum, tin, and other valuable minerals by equating them to the minerals of gold and silver, which share the same features, namely they are valuable things obtained from the earth's crust and profitable. The other principles used to justify the expansion of *zakāh* resources are:<sup>119</sup>

(i). The principle of distribution of wealth. This principle is based on a Prophetic tradition comprising the instruction of the Prophet to his delegate to Yemen, Mu'ādh b. Jabal, to collect *zakāh* from the rich and distribute it among the poor.<sup>120</sup> Based on this principle, the rich are obliged to contribute, in the name of *zakāh*, from their wealth for the poor, in order to establish a right and just balance between the two extremes. This should include all kinds of wealth that fulfill the requisite conditions.<sup>121</sup>

(ii) The consideration of what brings more benefits to the poor (*I'tibār mā anfa' li-al-fuqarā'*). This principle is always used to solve the problem disputed among the jurists regarding the specification of *zakāh* resources. In the case of *zakāh* of salary or income, for example, the jurists dispute whether it should be equated to cash (*al-nuqūd*), which requires the condition of *ḥawl*, or to crop products that require no condition of *ḥawl*. By considering this principle, some jurists choose the latter which means that *zakāh* is levied at the time of earning if the net balance meets the

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<sup>117</sup>Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya*, op.cit., pp. 92, 99-102.

<sup>118</sup>Detailed discussion about *zakāh* of salary will be covered in the next topic.

<sup>119</sup>Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya*, op.cit., pp. 92-102.

<sup>120</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Zakāh," 1,308; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Īmān," 27.

<sup>121</sup>Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya*, op.cit., p. 95.

condition of *niṣāb*. Otherwise, the rich would spend all their salary for personal luxurious purposes, such as buying non-*zakāh* properties, spending for holidays etc, leaving the balance below the *niṣāb*, and thus, free themselves from the obligation of *zakāh*.<sup>122</sup>

(iii) The autonomy of the *‘āmil mufawwaḍ* (authorized person who administers the fund of *zakāh*).<sup>123</sup> Under this principle, the *‘āmil mufawwaḍ* is given a special privilege to apply his own *ijtihād* or choose any suitable *ijtihād* of any *madhhab*, without being bound to the *ijtihād* of the leader or to the *madhhab* of the property owners.<sup>124</sup> This means that in identifying the properties that are subject to *zakāh*, especially with regard to the properties disputed among the jurists, the *‘āmil mufawwaḍ* is free to use his judgement, taking into account the common interests of the poor without oppressing the rich. Even though the *‘āmil mufawwaḍ* is required by classical *fiqh* to be a *mujtahid*, given the difficulty at the present time to find a *mujtahid*, a council comprising a group of scholar can be formed alternatively.<sup>125</sup>

Based on the above arguments, the reformists conclude that all kinds of modern wealth, which are the product of a person's capital and labour, should have *zakāh* imposed on them. A fact that must be scrutinized by the scholars is that the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet do not specifically specify the resources of *zakāh*, unlike the targeted groups to whom *zakāh* is due which are determined in detail by the Qur'ān. This has left room for Muslims to practice *ijtihād* in accordance with current needs. This is what has been exemplified by the leaders of the *madhāhib* who used to apply their *ijtihād* to adapt contemporary developments to the objectives of the *shar'ah*. The *qawl qadīm* (former opinion) and *qawl jadīd* (later opinion) of al-

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid., pp. 97, 101-102, 166.

<sup>123</sup>The original term used by al-Māwardī is *‘Ummāl al-Tafwīḍ*, i.e. authorized persons who are responsible for the affairs of *zakāh*. They are independent, according to al-Māwardī, in making policy about *zakāh*. There are other *zakāh* workers called *‘Ummāl al-Tanfīḍ* who are only responsible for collecting *zakāh* but have no power in making policy. See al-Māwardī, *al-Aḥkām al-Ṣulṭāniyyah wa al-Wilāyāt al-Dīniyyah* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Ḥalabī, 1966), p. 116.

<sup>124</sup>See Ibid.

<sup>125</sup>Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya*, op.cit., pp. 96-97.

Shāfiʿī, for instance, prove that the factors of surroundings and contemporary changes are essential considerations for *ijtihād*. The *ḥukm* must be realistic, otherwise the objectives of the *sharʿah* would not be achieved.<sup>126</sup>

In recent developments, this idea has attracted the *zakāh* authorities' interest, and they have attempted to impose *zakāh* on several new resources. For example, in 1987 the *zakāh* authority of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur drafted a new bill (Zakat and Fitrah Bill, 1987) to reform the local *zakāh* administration, which includes therein the expansion of *zakāh* resources. Section 18 of the bill (known as Draft of Zakat Act of Federal Territory, 1987) specifies the following items as subject to *zakāh*: (i) Gold and silver; (ii) cash, including loans; (iii) plantation products; (iv) farm animals; (v) *maʿdīn*; (vi) *kānz*; (vii) *rikāz*; (viii) trade commodities; (ix) shares; (x) salaries; (xi) construction; (xii) other incomes. The last four items are new resources. Among these four new items, however, until this research is being written, only *zakāh* on salary has been imposed.<sup>127</sup>

## ***Zakāh* of Agricultural Produce**

According to the traditional viewpoint based on the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, *zakāh* is levied only on crops which can be stored as food (*al-muddakhar al-muqtāt*), such as wheat, barley, rice, corn, peanut, dates and raisins. Any other farm produce which cannot be stored as food, such as olives, apples, oranges, melons, pomegranates and vegetables, are not subject to *zakāh*.<sup>128</sup> This is based on a Prophetic tradition narrated on the authority of Abū Burdah that the Prophet sent Abū Mūsā al-Ashʿarī and Muʿādh b. Jabal to Yemen to teach the people there about Islam, and he instructed them to

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<sup>126</sup>Ibid., pp. 164-165. Mahmood Zuhdi Ab. Majid, "Zakat Gaji dan Pendapatan Profesional Dari Perspektif Mazhab Syafi'i" in *Jurnal Syariah* vol. 1, number 2, July 1993, pp. 287-288.

<sup>127</sup>Other states such as Selangor and Perlis have also embarked on collecting *zakāh* on salary.

<sup>128</sup>Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 43-44; Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtādīn*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 96; Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭlaʿ al-Badrayn*, p. 57.

impose the *zakāh* only on four items, i.e. wheat, barley, dates and raisins.<sup>129</sup> Although this tradition only specifies four kinds of crops, it can be analogically extended to others which share the same underlying cause (*‘illah*), i.e. that they are food and they can be stored. Other crops are excused by the Prophet as they are perishables.<sup>130</sup> In the Malaysian context, according to this standpoint, the crops available that are subject to *zakāh* are rice, corn and peanuts, but in practice, *zakāh* is only imposed on rice as it is the only crop planted on a large scale.

For the reformists, *zakāh* on crops should not be limited to non-perishable food, but it should also be extended to all kinds of food, and even to everything produced from land.<sup>131</sup> This viewpoint, which is originally that of the Ḥanafīs, is based on the texts of the Qur’ān and Prophetic tradition which imply a general application. The Qur’ān states: “O you who believe, spend of the good things which you have earned, and of that which We have produced from the earth for you” (Q: 2: 267); “And it is He Who produces gardens trellised and un-trellised, and date-palms, and crops of different shapes and taste, and olives, and pomegranates, similar (in kind) and different (in taste). Eat of their fruit when they bear fruit, and pay the due thereof on the day of its harvest” (Q: 6: 141). These verses do not distinguish between the crops that are obliged for *zakāh*, or whether they are perishable food or not. The Prophet said: “There is a tenth (*‘ushr*) in what is watered by the sky, but in that which is irrigated there is a twentieth (*niṣf ‘ushr*).” In this tradition, the word “what” (*mā*) which is a relative pronoun like *alladhī* implies generality, and it does not specify any condition or underlying cause. If *zakāh* is specified on certain crops, it contradicts the generality of the above texts.<sup>132</sup>

Concerning the tradition mentioning that Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī and Mu‘ādh b.

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<sup>129</sup>Narrated by al-Ṭabarānī and al-Ḥākim, as quoted in Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 43-44. See also, al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, vol. 4, p. 143.

<sup>130</sup>Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 43-44; see also, idem, *Furū al-Masā’il*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 184.

<sup>131</sup>Mujaini Tarimin, *Zakat Pertanian Sistem dan Pelaksanaannya* (Kuala Lumpur: DBP, 1990), pp. 21-22; Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya*, op.cit., pp. 167-168.

<sup>132</sup>Mujaini Tarimin, *Zakat Pertanian Sistem dan Pelaksanaannya*, op.cit., p. 22.

Jabal were asked to collect the *zakāh* in Yemen on four kinds of crops, namely wheat, barley, dates and raisins, the reformists affirm that the status of this tradition itself lacks credibility, as clarified by Abū Ḥanīfah, because of the incompleteness and weakness of the narrators, and which therefore is categorized as a weak tradition.<sup>133</sup> If this tradition is accepted regardless of its status, it must be interpreted that this restriction was a temporary specification based on the situation that there might be only these four crops which were mainly cultivated at that time. Otherwise, it has no value as a *ḥukm* as it contradicts the sound evidence at higher level. They conclude that the specification of *zakāh* on certain crops has no basis in the Qur'ān, sound tradition, jurists' consensus or analogy, but is only based on jurists' personal judgement.<sup>134</sup>

From the above arguments, the reformists hold that the *zakāh* should be levied on all plantation products having a feature of growth potential (*al-namā'*),<sup>135</sup> whether they are storable food or not. These include rice, corn, peanuts, bananas, pineapples, cocoa, palms, coconuts, sugar cane, black pepper, local fruits, vegetables and others which are produced commercially.<sup>136</sup> The amount of payable *zakāh* for these crops can be equated by analogy with the amount imposed on rice. The minimum limit (*niṣāb*) of *zakāh* on crops specified by the Prophet is 5 *awsuq* which is equivalent to 652.80 kg. If the crops reach the *niṣāb*, the amount of payable *zakāh* is 1/10 (10%) of the total amount if they are watered by sky, or 1/20 (5%) if they are watered by man-made irrigation. At present, *zakāh* on rice is no longer paid in its raw material form, but it is paid in cash value. This practice is adopted from the Ḥanafī's point of view.

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<sup>133</sup>Mujaini Tarimin, *Zakat Pertanian*, op.cit., p. 23; see also, Yūsuf al-Qarāḍawī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1981), vol. 1, pp. 355-356.

<sup>134</sup>Mujaini Tarimin, *Zakat Pertanian*, op.cit., p. 23; T. M. Hasbi Ash Shiddieqy, *Pedoman Zakat*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1975), p. 112.

<sup>135</sup>Growth potential (*al-namā'*) is one of the conditions of *zakāh* fixed by the jurists of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*. It means the ability of property to increase due to cultivation, reproduction or exchange, and which generates income or profit for the owner and is not for his basic use. See al-Kasānī, *Badā'i' al-Ṣanā'i'* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḥalabī, 1973), vol. 2, p. 11; Ibn 'Abidīn, *Ḥāshiyah Ibn 'Abidīn* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Ḥalabī, n.d.), vol. 2, p. See also, al-Qarāḍawī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 138-139.

<sup>136</sup>See Mujaini Tarimin, *Zakat Pertanian*, op.cit., p. 22, 31.



Even if this practice contradicts the viewpoint of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* who prohibit the *zakāh* to be paid in price, the Council of Religious Affairs in all states in Malaysia perceive that this practice is more suitable in the modern situation. The reformists suggest that *zakāh* on those crops are also payable in cash value. This means that the *niṣāb* of all valuable crops is the price of 652.80 kg of them.<sup>137</sup>

The obligation of *zakāh* on such crops is not a *bidʿah* or against the principle of *sharʿah*, but it is, as a matter of fact, embodied in the principle of common interest of the community (*maṣlahat al-ummah*) and justice (*al-ʿadālah*) underlying the purposes (*maqāṣid*) of the *sharʿah*. It is unfair to impose the *zakāh* only on paddy farmers, but exempt other farmers or owners of large farms, such as palm farms operated on a large scale, whose income is far higher than the paddy farmers'. Such crops at the present time have been a great resource of wealth which deserves the imposition of *zakāh* for the benefits of people in need. A purpose of *zakāh* is to attain equitable distribution of wealth among the community, so that both the rich and the poor can share social wealth to satisfy their needs. If the imposition of *zakāh* is limited to certain resources of wealth, it is difficult to achieve that purpose.<sup>138</sup> At this point, the reformists assert that the Malay traditional thought that one must stick only to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* should be changed, and they must be ready to adopt any other *madhhabs*' standpoints or contemporary *ijtihāds* compatible with contemporary circumstances. If they can adopt the Ḥanafīs standpoint in paying *zakāh* of rice by its price, there is no reason for them to reject the obligation of *zakāh* on those crops. This change is not a sin, but is a solution for a current problem.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Ibid., pp. 43-44; Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya*, op.cit., pp. 167-168.

<sup>138</sup>Mujaini Tarimin, *Zakat Pertanian*, op.cit., p. 23; Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat Beberapa Masalah Semasa dan Penyelesaiannya*, op.cit., pp. 164-166.

<sup>139</sup>Mujaini Tarimin, *Zakat Pertanian*, op.cit., p. 24.



## ***Zakāh* of Salary or Professional Income**

Today, one's salary or income including allowances, bonuses, benefit, bounty, reward, wages, etc, which is earned through the result of one's service or labour, paid whether by an employer or a client, has become a great source of wealth. Thus, the question is posed, whether *zakāh* should be imposed on this particular source of wealth or not. In the traditional writing of *fiqh*, a basic idea regarding this matter is discovered in a few sources, such as in *al-Muḥallā* of Ibn Ḥazm and *al-Mughnī* of Ibn Qudāmah. Nowadays, the idea of imposing *zakāh* on salary is strongly held by some prominent scholars such as the Egyptian Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī and his teachers Muḥammad al-Ghazālī and Muḥammad Abū Zahrah.<sup>140</sup>

In Malaysia, this idea, which is associated with the reformists, has been a controversial issue, since the suggestion that *zakāh* should be collected at the time it is obtained contradicts the traditional thought of most Malay Muslims. For the traditionalists, as salary and professional income are received in the form of cash, its *zakāh* should be paid under the method of *zakāh* of cash. Thus, there is no question about the *zakāh* of salary as it can be placed under the treatment of *zakāh* of cash saving which is subject to the condition of *ḥawl*. This means that if the balance of salary is saved and it reaches the *niṣāb* for one whole year, *zakāh* is imposed under the name of cash saving. This is the common understanding based on the Shāfi'i *madhhab*.<sup>141</sup> Contrarily, the reformists maintain that *zakāh* on salary should be distinguished from *zakāh* on cash saving, for it seems to be more similar with plantation products in terms of the way it is obtained, i.e. the outcome of one's effort, labour and skill. Inasmuch as *zakāh* of plantations is paid on the day of its harvest without being subject to the condition of *ḥawl*, they recommend that *zakāh* on salary should be treated similarly.<sup>142</sup> Their arguments on this issue, which mainly

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<sup>140</sup>See Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 459-489.

<sup>141</sup>Mahmood Zuhdi Ab. Majid, "Zakat Gaji Dari Perspektif Mazhab Syafi'i," op.cit., pp. 287-288.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., p. 289; Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat*, op.cit., pp. 101-102.

refer to al-Qaraḍāwī's viewpoint in his *Fiqh al-Zakah*, can be summarized as the following.

The justification of *zakāh* on salary is drawn from the Qur'ān: 2: 267: "O you who believe, spend of the good things which you have earned (*mā kasab-tum*).<sup>143</sup>" The phrase *mā kasab-tum* in the verse is understood as comprising all kinds of earnings, which include salary or income. *Zakāh* on salary is also extended from the concept of *māl mustafād* (property accrued as profit), which is defined as any new profit obtained in a permissible way, such as salary, professional income, income of the capital which is not traded, and others.<sup>144</sup> Under this concept, they assert, if the *māl mustafād* is a profit of one's property payable for *zakāh*, such as trade commodities and farm animals bred for commercial purposes, that profit must be combined together with the property (capital), and *zakāh* is payable after the conditions of *niṣāb* and *ḥawl* are fulfilled. If the profit is the price of the property on which *zakāh* has been paid, such as the price of crop products or the price of farm animals on which *zakāh* has already been paid, there is no more *zakāh* on that price, because *zakāh* is not imposed twice on a property.<sup>144</sup> This is the ordinary form of *zakāh* understood by many people. However, the essential question of this *māl mustafād* is, if the profit is not earned through the investment of the property, but it is acquired by its own, such as in the form of wages of his work, should *zakāh* be paid after the *ḥawl* is complete as *zakāh* on saved cash; or should *zakāh* be paid immediately after the profit is gained regardless of the condition of *ḥawl*? The popular answer among the jurists is the first one, i.e. *zakāh* should be paid when the *ḥawl* is complete on the basis of saved property. This standpoint is held by Abū Ḥanīfah, Mālik and al-Shāfi'ī. However, the reformists abandon the popular opinion and choose the unpopular one, i.e. that *zakāh* must be imposed at the time the profit is acquired, without being

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<sup>143</sup>Mahmood Zuhdi Ab. Majid, "Zakat Gaji dan Pendapatan Profesional" in *Jurnal Syariah*, vol. 1, number 1, January - June 1993, p. 33; Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 490-491.

<sup>144</sup>Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji dan Pendapatan Profesional," op.cit., pp. 33-34; Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 491.

subject to the condition of *ḥawl*.<sup>145</sup> This is the standpoint of Dāwūd al-Zāhiri and Ibn Ḥazm and a group of the Shī'ah *madhhab*. At this point the reformists emphasize that the person to whom the standpoint belongs does not matter in Islamic law, rather the important matter is adopting the standpoint which suits the purposes of *Sharfah* and meets the interests of the community.<sup>146</sup>

There are some reasons for the reformists to choose such a standpoint. To begin with, they affirm that the status of the Prophetic tradition regarding the condition of *ḥawl* for the *māl mustafād* is weak. The tradition is narrated on the authority of al-Tirmidhī from Ibn 'Umar who said that the Prophet said: "If someone gets property, there is no *zakāh* on it until a period of a year has passed over it while it is in the possession of its owner."<sup>147</sup> The narrator of this tradition, al-Tirmidhī himself admitted that this tradition falls into the category of weak and suspended (*mawqūf*), and therefore it cannot be a basis of *ḥukm*. Secondly, there is a tradition of Ibn 'Abbās narrated by Abū 'Ubayd in his *al-Amwāl*, mentioning that whoever obtains *māl mustafād* should pay its *zakāh* on the day he gains it.<sup>148</sup> However, they admit that these two reasons are not a strong enough base for their standpoint as they are disputable among the jurists. As regards the above-mentioned Prophetic tradition, although al-Tirmidhī regarded it as weak and suspended, the other traditionists regarded it otherwise. Al-Kahlānī in his *Subul al-Salām* remarks that this tradition can be considered sound as there are many traditions of the Companions which indicate a similar meaning. Even if this tradition is suspended, he says, it has a degree of *raf* as it explains matters which are beyond the room of *ijtihād*.<sup>149</sup> With regard to the tradition of Ibn 'Abbās, Abū 'Ubayd himself, the narrator of the tradition, interpreted

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<sup>145</sup>Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji dan Pendapatan Profesional," op.cit., p. 34; Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat*, op.cit., pp. 93-94; Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 492.

<sup>146</sup>Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji," p. 35; Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat*, 102.

<sup>147</sup>See *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Zakāh," 572.

<sup>148</sup>As cited in Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji dan Pendapatan Profesional," op.cit., p. 37; Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 498..

<sup>149</sup>As quoted in Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji dan Pendapatan Profesional," op.cit., p. 37.

*māl mustafād* as land, based on the custom of the people of Madinah who use the term *māl* to refer to land.<sup>150</sup> Based on this interpretation, the *ḥukm* of paying *zakāh* on the day of acquisition is only applied to land products, not to any other.

As the evidences from the *naṣṣ* do not much support their viewpoint, the reformists turn to the principle of *qiyās*. By using the method of *qiyās*, salary and professional income are equated with plantation products under the same underlying cause (*‘illah*), namely, they are produced from the utilization of one’s energy, ability and expertise.<sup>151</sup> They acknowledge that this idea may sound somewhat absurd and difficult to accept for the moment, but there are factors to be considered. According to them, in the context of Malaysian society nowadays, salary and professional income are the most important sources of wealth for many Muslims especially in urban areas where no other sources of wealth, except trading, are available. If *zakāh* is not levied on their incomes, except on savings collected once a year, most of them would be free from the obligation of *zakāh* even if they were wealthy. This is because, in the view of the reformists, there are so many rich people who tend not to save or invest their wealth for profit, but to spend it on luxuries. As a result, most of the rich are freed from the obligation of *zakāh*, and *zakāh* is mainly paid by paddy farmers living in the rural areas. This phenomenon does not only show the defect of fulfilling the Prophet’s instruction to collect the *zakāh* from the rich to be distributed among the poor, but, it would also damage the social justice demanded by the *shar‘ah*. Therefore, a method to justify the collection of *zakāh* on salary and professional income at the time they are acquired is necessary, and the reformists find that the method of *qiyās* is worthwhile and applicable in this case. This standpoint is, in fact, derived from a viewpoint held by contemporary scholars such as Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī and Aḥmad ‘Alī al-Salūsī, which they claim as a precautionary (*iḥtiyātī*) standpoint that originates from the standpoint of some Companions such as Ibn ‘Abbās,

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<sup>150</sup>As quoted in *ibid*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>151</sup>Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji Dari Perspektif Mazhab Syafi'i" *op.cit.*, p. 289; Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat*, *op.cit.*, pp. 101-102.

The application of *qiyās* in this issue, as a matter of fact, refers to the principle of *maṣlaḥah* (common interests) to preserve the benefit of the poor and those who face financial hardship. The reality in Malaysia shows that there are many rich people in the country, but the funds of *zakāh* are still low and inadequate for distribution among those in need. One of the causes of this problem, the reformists maintain, is the failure to understand the real concept and objectives of *zakāh* which has resulted in limited implementation of *zakāh* in the community. They maintain, repeating al-Qaraḍāwī's statements, that it is unfair to put a burden of *zakāh* on farmers who have to pay 10% or 5% from their small annual or biannual income, but the rich such as engineers, lawyers, doctors and government officers, who receive handsome monthly income, are free from the obligation. The fact is that there are the rich who spend their income on buying non-*zakāh* properties for personal consumption and do not save their money longer than a few months; and there are many spendthrifts who spend their income on luxuries, and purposely leave their money below the *niṣāb* to avoid the obligation of *zakāh*. If *zakāh* on income is imposed at the time it is obtained, these problems could be avoided and the interests of the people in need would be more secured. The application of the principle of *maṣlaḥah* in this issue, they claim, is in line with contemporary needs in protecting the interests of the community, and this is in accordance with the principles of the *shar'fah*. Even if the *maṣlaḥah* is a subsidiary source of evidence in Islamic law, it can be utilized in cases where no text (*naṣṣ*) explains them clearly.<sup>153</sup>

Concerning the payable rate of *zakāh*, the reformists' suggest that the rate should be the same as *zakāh* on cash since the salary is received in cash. This means

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<sup>152</sup>Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat*, op.cit., pp. 101-103; Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji dan Pendapatan Profesional," op.cit., p. 34. See also, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 491.

<sup>153</sup>Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji dan Pendapatan Profesional," op.cit., p. 39; Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *Fiqh al-Zakāh*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 505; Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat*, op.cit., pp. 93-94.

that the payable rate is 2.5% of the balance of the salary if it reaches the *niṣāb*<sup>154</sup> after the deductions for basic needs and debts. The amount of 2.5% is payable at the time the salary is received to make sure that even if one spends his salary over the limit of his basic needs, he is still obliged to pay the *zakāh*. Excessive spending is a kind of extravagance which is discouraged.<sup>155</sup>

Currently, although there is a controversy regarding this issue and official fatwa is not yet issued, many states in Malaysia, such as Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Perlis, have started to introduce *zakāh* on salary and professional income to Muslims. Through the active campaigns held by the *zakāh* authorities, Muslims' awareness on this issue is increasing, and the implementation of *zakāh* has been well received although there are people who neglect it due to their own ignorance, or possibly, their unwillingness to adopt a new perspective.

## Matters Regarding Fasting (*Ṣiyām*) during the Month of Ramaḍān

### Confirmation of the Beginning of Ramaḍān by Sighting (*Ru'yah*) and Astronomical Calculation (*Hisāb*) Methods

The traditionalists and the reformists agree that the commencement of fasting of Ramaḍān is determined by the visibility of the new moon, but they dispute about whether the mechanism of astronomical calculation is permissible to ascertain the existence of the new moon. The traditionalists maintain that the beginning of Ramaḍān is determined by the method of sighting (*ru'yah*),<sup>156</sup> while the method of

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<sup>154</sup>The *niṣāb* of cash is the value of 20 *mithqāl* [85g] of gold which is equivalent to approximately 3,000 Malaysian ringgit.

<sup>155</sup>Mahmood Zuhdi, "Zakat Gaji Dari Perspektif Mazhab Syafi'i," op.cit., p. 292. Abdullah Ibrahim, *Zakat*, op.cit., pp. 102-103.

<sup>156</sup>According to a resolution of the Istanbul Islamic Countries Conference on *Hilāl* 1978, *ru'yah* is defined as the visibility of new moon by naked eye sighting or by the assistance of telescope. See Baharrudin (continued...)



astronomical calculation is used secondarily to assist and facilitate the method of sighting, and it cannot be a self-sufficient means to confirm the new moon. The reformists assert that the method of astronomical calculation is permissible in cases where the mechanism of sighting is impossible to take place. The arguments of both sides can be summarized as follows:

The traditionalists' standpoint, which maintains that the beginning of Ramaḍān is to be confirmed by the method of sighting, refers to many Prophetic traditions, such as the following traditions:<sup>157</sup>

Qays b. Ṭalq narrated from his father that the Prophet said: "Indeed, God has created these crescents (*al-ahillah*) as signs to mark fixed periods of time (*mawāqit*) for mankind. Start fasting on sighting it (the crescent of Ramaḍān), and break the fast on sighting it (the crescent of Shawwāl), and if the sky is overcast, then complete the number."<sup>158</sup>

Abū Hurayrah narrated that the Prophet mentioned the crescent moon (*al-hilāl*) and then said: "Start fasting when you see it (the crescent of Ramaḍān), and break the fast when you see it (the crescent of Shawwāl), but when (the actual position of the month is) concealed from you (on account of cloudy sky), then count thirty days."<sup>159</sup>

Ribʿī b. Khirāsh, and other Companions narrated from the Prophet that he said: "Do not precede the month (of Ramaḍān), but wait until you complete the number (of the month of Shaʿbān) or you see the crescent (of Ramaḍān)."<sup>160</sup>

ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās narrated that the Prophet said: "Start fasting when you see it (the crescent of Ramaḍān), and break the fast when you see it (the crescent of Shawwāl), but when (the actual position of the month is) concealed from you (on account of a cloudy sky), then complete the number thirty days. Do not rush to start the new month."<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>156</sup>(...continued)

Zainal, "Di mana anak bulan Syawal 1418 Hijrah?" in *Berita Harian*, 13 January 1998, p. 6. However, for some traditionalists, using telescope or any similar tools is unacceptable. See Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Tullāb*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 95; Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 129.

<sup>157</sup>See Saiyid Alwi b. Tahir al-Haddad, *Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 107-109.

<sup>158</sup>Narrated by Aḥmad and al-Ṭabarānī. See for example, *al-Musnad*, "Musnad al-Madaniyīn," 15,702.

<sup>159</sup>See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1,811; *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 2,094.

<sup>160</sup>See *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 2,099; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Ṣawm," 1981; *al-Musnad*, "Musnad al-Kūfiyīn," 18,071.

<sup>161</sup>See *Sunan al-Nasāʾī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 2,100; *al-Musnad*, "Musnad Banī Hāshim," 1,881.

These traditions, the traditionalists emphasize, lay down the principle that the commencement of the Islamic lunar month is subject to the visibility of the new moon; and if the new moon is invisible because of an overcast sky, the count of the month must be completed as thirty days. The beginning of fasting, without exception, also relies on the visibility of the new moon of Ramaḍān, and if it is not seen, the month of Shaʿbān must be completed as thirty days. This is the common rule of commencing and breaking fasting which is agreed by the majority of jurists, and it is not permitted, they assert, to base the beginning of Ramaḍān on astronomical calculation as the traditions do not signify that. The traditions only denote that the basis of the commencement of fasting is the visibility of the new moon, notwithstanding its existence, so that if clouds obstruct its visibility, the new moon must be considered as not existing even if it does actually exist.<sup>162</sup>

For the traditionalists, the astronomical calculation can only play a technical role in this matter and it cannot replace the method of sighting. This is because the important aspect emphasized by Islamic law is the judgment of apparent matters (*ḥukm ṣāḥir*), and with regard to this case, it is the sighting of the light of crescent (*nūr al-hilāl*) which cannot be carried out by the method of calculation.<sup>163</sup> However, they affirm, even if the public cannot rely on the astronomical calculation, the astronomers themselves can rely on their calculation to begin or break fasting.<sup>164</sup>

The reformists hold that astronomical calculation is permissible for ascertaining the beginning of the new month when there are factors that conceal sighting and make it impossible. They maintain that the important element in confirming the beginning of the new month is the existence of the new moon, which can be identified

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<sup>162</sup>Saiyid Alwi b. Tahir al-Haddad, *Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 110.

<sup>163</sup>Baharuddin Zainal, "Di Mana Anak Bulan Syawal 1418 Hijrah," op.cit., p. 6.

<sup>164</sup>Muhammad Arshad Banjari, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 129; Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 95-96.

either by sighting, or, if this is impossible, by astronomical calculation.<sup>165</sup> This standpoint is constructed on several Prophetic traditions such as the following traditions:

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar reported that the Prophet mentioned Ramaḍān and said: “Don’t start fasting until you see the crescent (of Ramaḍān), and don’t break the fast until you see the crescent (of Shawwāl). If it is concealed, make an assessment about it (*fa-qdurū lahu*).”<sup>166</sup>

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar narrated that the Prophet said: “Indeed, the (count of) month is twenty nine (days). Don’t start fasting until you see it (the crescent of Ramaḍān), and don’t break the fast until you see it (the crescent of Shawwāl). When it is concealed, make an assessment about it.”<sup>167</sup>

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar also narrated from the Prophet that he said: “Fast on sighting it (the crescent of Ramaḍān), and break the fast on sighting it (the crescent of Shawwāl). If it is concealed, make an assessment about it.”<sup>168</sup>

The reformists maintain that the phrase “make an assessment about it (*fa-qdurū lahu*),” which is a general statement (*ijmāl*), can be interpreted as making an astronomical calculation, as formerly stated by a group of jurists including Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, Ibn Surayj, Muṭarrif b. ‘Abd Allāh and Ibn Qutaybah.<sup>169</sup> Even if the majority of jurists uphold that the phrase “make an assessment about it (*fa-qdurū lahu*)” means “make an assessment by completing the month as thirty days (*fa-qdurū lahu thalāthīn*)” as appears in many other Prophetic traditions, the reformists insist that the method of completing the month as thirty days if sighting is not possible is to ensure that fasting is observed rightly in the month of Ramaḍān, and not to precede it. However, they assert, this method is not a fixed rule, but it is only a solution recommended by the Prophet at his time, when astronomical knowledge among the

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<sup>165</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman ‘Ibādah Puasa* (Penang: Persama Press, 1953), pp. 89-93; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 555-556.

<sup>166</sup>See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb al-Ṣawm,” 1,773; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, “Kitāb al-Ṣiyām,” p. 1,795.

<sup>167</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, “Kitāb al-Ṣiyām,” p. 1,797; *Sunan al-Nasā’i*, “Kitāb al-Ṣiyām,” 2,092; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, “Kitāb al-Ṣawm,” 1,976; *al-Musnad*, “Musnad al-Mukthirīn min al-Ṣaḥābah,” 4,258; *al-Muwaṭṭa’*, “Kitāb al-Ṣiyām,” 558.

<sup>168</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb al-Ṣawm,” 1,767; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, “Kitāb al-Ṣiyām,” p. 1,799.

<sup>169</sup>Al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vo. 4, pp. 262-263; Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, vol. 7, p. 189; Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 284.

Arabs was not yet developed, and precise calculations for the new moon were unknown.<sup>170</sup> This is hinted at by the Prophet himself as he said: "We are an illiterate nation, we neither write nor know accounts. The month is like this and like this, (i.e.) sometimes of twenty nine days and sometimes of thirty days."<sup>171</sup> This tradition is a simple statement of the prevailing conditions during the early days in Madīnah where Muslim scribes could write and compute, but complicated calculations of the new moon were still unknown among the Muslims. But now that the knowledge of astronomy has developed and broadened, and the movement of the moon can be calculated accurately as we see nowadays, there is no reason why astronomical calculation cannot be a criterion for the determination of the month of Ramaḍān.<sup>172</sup>

The reformists add, quoting al-Alūsī and Rashīd Riḍā's standpoint with regard to the verse of Qur'ān "whoever of you witnesses (*shahida*) the month (of Ramaḍān), must fast that month" (2: 185), that the phrase "witnesses the month (*shahida al-shahr*)" doesn't mean "witnesses the crescent (*shahida al-hilāl*)" as interpreted by many commentators, for the Arabs never say "witnesses the crescent (*shahida al-hilāl*)," but they say "see the crescent (*ra'ā al-hilāl*). Therefore, the phrase "witnesses the month (*shahida al-shahr*)" should be understood to mean "being convinced of the presence of the month." To be convinced of the presence of the month of Ramaḍān means that the month can be determined either by sighting the crescent or by using astronomical calculations.<sup>173</sup>

The reformists further assert that astronomical evidence, as a matter of fact, is acknowledged by the Qur'ān itself as it states:

"It is He who made the sun a shining thing and the moon as a light, and (He) has measured out its phases (*manāzil*), that you might know the number of

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<sup>170</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman 'Ibādah Puasa*, pp. 90-91; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 556.

<sup>171</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣawm," 1,780; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1,806.

<sup>172</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman 'Ibādah Puasa*, p. 92; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 556-557.

<sup>173</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman 'Ibādah Puasa*, op.cit., p. 89. See also, al-Alūsī, *Tafsīr Rūḥ al-Mā'ānī* (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿArabī, 7 ed. 1972), vol. 1, p. 152; Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, no date), vol. 2, p. 223.

years and calculation” (10: 5).

“And the moon, We have determined its phases (which it traverses) till it returns like an old dried curved date stalk” (36:39).

“The sun and the moon run on their exactly computed courses” (55:5).

“They ask you about crescent moons. Say: they are for fixing time for people, and for *ḥajj*” (2: 189).

The reformists maintain that these verses emphasize the significance of the moon and the sun as a guide to calculating time for mankind, and confirm the use of astronomical calculation in their daily life. By the establishment of astronomical knowledge, Muslims have been confidently relying on it to determine the time of daily prayers, times of starting and breaking the fast, etc. If Muslims can rely on astronomical calculations in these matters, why cannot they rely on them for determining the new moon of Ramaḍān, the reformists argue.<sup>174</sup>

The traditionalists insist that sighting, which is an *‘illah* (underlying cause for a rule) of fasting of Ramaḍān, is a matter of *ta‘abbud*, and is specified by a clear *naṣṣ*, which, therefore, must be considered as a fixed rule. Fasting is based on sighting the new moon of Ramaḍān, no matter whether this occurs at the actual possible time of sighting or after it. It is not proper to regard that when the new moon rises in the sky, regardless of whether the people see it or not, it would be the first night of the month. It should be visible to the people and they should see it to start the month. If they don’t see it, then it would carry no value for them.<sup>175</sup> This point of view is based on the tradition narrated by Muslim on the authority of Abu al-Bakhtarī who said: “We went to perform lesser pilgrimage, and when we arrived at the date-palm farm, we saw the crescent (of Ramaḍān). Some people said that it was three nights old, and some others said it was two nights old. Later, we met Ibn ‘Abbās and mentioned this to him. He informed us that the Prophet said: ‘God has set crescent sighting as an

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<sup>174</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman ‘Ibādah Puasa*, op.cit., p. 92; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 558.

<sup>175</sup>Saiyid Alwi al-Haddad, *Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 110-111.

indication of Ramaḍān. Thus, Ramaḍān starts on the night that you see it.”<sup>176</sup>

At a certain level, some traditionalists seem to have an extreme standpoint regarding this issue. Saiyid Alwi al-Haddad, the former *muftī* of Johor state, has delivered a *fatwā* mentioning that “those who fast earlier than the others without relying on a sighting, and only rely on doubt (*wahm*) or astronomical calculation, fall into the group of Rāfiḍiyyah (a group of Shī‘ah sect), and this has been said by scholars. Preceding the fasting is a custom of the Rāfiḍīs which was then followed by the Qādiyānīs, and some Indonesians who have links with the Qādiyānīs.....” He further says: “preceding the fasting of Ramaḍān without sighting or completing the month contradicts the instruction laid down by the Prophetic traditions...”<sup>177</sup>

The reformists denounce this *fatwā* saying it is baseless, too rigid, excessive and obsolete. They insist that what is meant by preceding the month as prohibited in the tradition of Rib‘ī b. Khirāsh is to begin fasting before Ramaḍān begins, and this never occurs in using astronomical calculation as it can confirm precisely when the month begins. To counter this *fatwā*, they also convey the standpoint of some jurists of the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab*, such as Ibn Rif‘ah, al-Zarkashī, al-Subkī, al-Khaṭīb and al-Ramlī, who approve of fasting based on astronomical calculation maintaining that it can be relied on, as it is based on definite knowledge.<sup>178</sup>

Recent developments show that the traditionalists seem to be adopting the method of astronomical calculation in determining the beginning of Ramaḍān, in addition to a sighting, i.e. a method known as *imkān al-ru’yah*. For more than ten years, the Islamic Center of Malaysia has been proclaiming that both a sighting and astronomical calculation will be used in determining the beginning of Ramaḍān, but they do not elaborate on how far astronomical calculation is used. The practice in Malaysia shows that the sighting of the new moon through a special telescope is done at about twenty six places throughout the country on the evening of 29<sup>th</sup> of Shā‘bān.

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<sup>176</sup>See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, “Kitāb al-Ṣiyām,” 1,820.

<sup>177</sup>Saiyid Alwi al-Haddad, *Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 122.

<sup>178</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman ‘Ibādah Puasa*, op.cit., p. 93.



Before the last decade the Penyimpan Mohor Besar Raja-raja (the Keeper of the Rulers' Seal), who was assigned to declare the beginning of the fasting of Ramaḍān to the public, used to state in his declaration whether the new moon had been seen or not. However, for the last ten years his declaration was only to announce the day that Ramaḍān begins, and it has not mentioned whether the new moon has been seen or not. Some people believe that the Islamic Center has been relying on astronomical calculation regardless of the result of sighting. The irony is they claim to observe sighting only to confirm the astronomical calculation, not vice versa.

### The Prayer of Ramaḍān Nights (*Ṣalāt al-Tarāwīḥ*)

The jurists agree that the Ramaḍān night prayers, which are known as *tarāwīḥ* prayers, are more desirable than night prayers during any of other the months, because the Prophet said: "He who celebrates the nights of Ramaḍān praying and worshipping because of his faith and only for God's sake, will have all prior sins that have issued forth from him forgiven."<sup>179</sup> In the Malaysian context, the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists with regard to the matter of *tarāwīḥ* prayers revolves mainly around its practical manner. The conflict occurs when the reformists denounce the traditionalists' specific way of performing *tarāwīḥ* prayers and the additional practices accompanying them. The traditionalists have established their own specific way of performing the *tarāwīḥ* prayers despite the fact that it was never prescribed in any *fiqh* books.<sup>180</sup> The traditionalists regard this way to be a good *bid'ah* (*bid'ah ḥasanah*), while the reformists regard it as a blameworthy *bid'ah* (*bid'ah madhmūmah*). The dispute between the traditionalists and reformists concerning this matter is reflected in the following aspects:

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<sup>179</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Tarāwīḥ," 1,870; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn wa Qaṣrī-hā," 1,269.

<sup>180</sup>See Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata To' Hāji dan To' Lebai* (Penang: The United Press, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, n.d.), pp. 36-44; *Solat Tarawih* (Kuala Lumpur: Yayasan Pembangunan Ekonomi Islam Malaysia, 1996), pp. 2-28.

## Recitation of the Qur'ān in *Tarāwīḥ* Prayers

The traditionalists, who perform *tarāwīḥ* prayers in twenty *rak'ahs* plus three *rak'ahs* of *witr* (odd) prayer, have specified certain *surahs* to be recited in every two *rak'ahs* of a prayer. For the first part of Ramaḍān, i.e. from the first to the fifteenth night of Ramaḍān, the *sūrah*s recited in the first *rak'ah* (one *sūrah* for every first *rak'ah*) after the *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, in chronological order are: (1) *Sūrat al-Takāthur*; (2) *Sūrat al-ʿAṣr*; (3) *Sūrat al-Humazah*; (4) *Sūrat al-Fīl*; (5) *Sūrat Quraysh*; (6) *Sūrat al-Māʿūn*; (7) *Sūrat al-Kawthar*; (8) *Sūrat al-Kāfirūn*; (9) *Sūrat al-Naṣr*; (10) *Sūrat al-Masad*. In every second *rak'ah* of the prayers, *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* is recited. For the second part of Ramaḍān, i.e. from the sixteenth night onwards, they specify *Sūrat al-Qadr* to be recited in every first *rak'ah* of the prayers, while in the second *rak'ah*, the *sūrah*s recited in the first *rak'ah* of the prayers in the first part of Ramaḍān are recited.

Such a specification, according to the traditionalists, is to facilitate the *imām* and *ma'mūms* remembering the count of *rak'ahs*, and it is not a fixed rule. One can recite any *sūrah* he wishes, and if he has memorized the whole Qur'ān, he is recommended to recite two or three parts (*juz'*) of the Qur'ān, or one part for each night, so he can complete the recitation of the whole Qur'ān by the end of Ramaḍān.<sup>181</sup> However, in practice, it is seldom that one finds the traditionalists performing the *tarāwīḥ* prayers with long recitation of the Qur'ān; on the contrary, most of them recite the specified *sūrah*s.

For the reformists, such a specification, even if it is said that it is not a fixed rule, is baseless as it is not prescribed by any authoritative proof. They regard the traditionalists' reason for such specification, i.e. for remembering the count of *rak'ahs*, as naive and unacceptable, as it is not a difficult matter to remember the count of *rak'ahs* if they perform the prayer with solemnity and full submissiveness (*khushūʿ*). Fixing certain *sūrah*s for certain *rak'ahs* would also mislead ordinary people who might regard it as a *sunnah* of the Prophet if it were not clearly explained. The

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<sup>181</sup>Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata To' Hāji dan To' Lebai*, op.cit., p. 36; *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., p. 3.

Qur'ān mentions that any *sūrah* or verses can be recited as long as one is comfortable with it. It states: "Recite as much of the Qur'ān as may be easy for you" (74: 20). However, they assert, it is better to lengthen the recitation of the Qur'ān in this prayer as this is a *sunnah* that the Prophet used to do.

Although the traditionalists perform twenty *rak'ahs* of *tarāwīḥ* prayers and three *rak'ahs* of *witr* prayer, the prayers are done quickly and are over in a very short time. This has been a subject of criticism by the reformists who say that such haste, which is possibly due to the ignorance of the *imām* or the laziness of the *ma'mūms*, would damage the spirit of the prayer as it is done so quickly that it damages the *arkān*, the *sunnahs* and the ethics of the prayer.<sup>182</sup> For instance, in reciting *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, which is a *rukn* of prayer, the *imām* is observed to recite the verses quickly and continuously in a single breath without any *waqf* (pause). Other *arkān* are also done in a hurry, by which they can finish two *rak'ahs* of the *tarāwīḥ* prayers within two or three minutes. The reformists affirm that this haste contradicts the concept of the *tarāwīḥ* prayers which means the prayer of rest, that should be performed with relaxation without rushing.<sup>183</sup> It also contradicts the Prophet's practice who used to lengthen and beautify his prayer during Ramaḍān. It is reported that ʿAbd Raḥmān b. ʿAwf asked ʿĀ'ishah, the Prophet's wife, regarding the prayer of the Prophet during Ramaḍān and she said: "The Prophet never exceeded eleven *rak'ahs* in Ramaḍān or in other months; he used to perform four *rak'ahs*, do not ask me about their beauty and length, then four *rak'ahs*, do not ask me about their beauty and length, and then three *rak'ahs*." ʿĀ'ishah further said: "I said, 'O Messenger of God, do you sleep before performing the *witr* prayer?' He replied: 'O ʿĀ'ishah, my eyes sleep but my heart remains awake.'"<sup>184</sup> Al-Nuʿmān b. Bashīr is reported to have said: "We prayed with the Prophet on the 23<sup>rd</sup> night of Ramaḍān until one third of the night. Then we prayed with him on the 25<sup>th</sup> night until half the night. Then we prayed with him on the 27<sup>th</sup>

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<sup>182</sup>Abdul Ghani Azmi b. Hj. Idris, *Amalan Bid'ah Pada Bulan Muharram, Rejab, Sya'ban & Ramadhan* (Kuala Lumpur: Al-Hidayah Publisher, 1995), p. 163.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid., pp. 164-165.

<sup>184</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Tarāwīḥ," 1,874; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Musāfirin," 1,219.

night until we assumed that we would miss the *falaḥ*, which they call the *saḥūr*.<sup>185</sup>

### Chanting the *Dhikrs* and Blessing upon the Prophet between the *Tarāwīḥ* Prayers

To begin the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, it is customary for the traditionalists to chant certain *dhikrs* and blessing upon the Prophet en masse by raising their voices in a particular rhythm.<sup>186</sup> The *Tok Bilal* firstly chants a *dhikr*: "*Subḥān Allāh wa al-ḥamd li-Allāh wa lā ilāha illā Allāh wa Allāh akbar, wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh al-‘Alī al-‘Azīm* (Glory be to God, all praises be to God, there is no god but God, He is the Greatest, there is no power and no strength save in God the Most High the Most Great)." He then chants the blessing upon the Prophet (*al-ṣalāt ‘alā al-nabī*) three times, each being longer than the one before it. He chants: "*Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Muḥammad* (O God, bless Muḥammad)," first followed by "*Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā sayyidi-nā Muḥammad* (O God, bless our chief Muḥammad)," and then "*Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā sayyidi-nā wa ḥabībī-nā wa shaffī-nā wa dhukhri-nā wa mawlā-nā Muḥammad* (O God, bless upon our chief, our beloved, our advocate, our treasure, and our master Muḥammad)." The *ma'mūms* reply simultaneously and loudly: "*Ṣallā Allāh wa sallam ‘alayh* (may God bless and salute him)" each time. The *Tok Bilal* then calls the *ma'mūms* to perform the *tarāwīḥ* prayers saying: "*Ṣalāt al-tarāwīḥ min qiyām shahr Ramaḍān athāba-kum Allāh* (Come to *tarāwīḥ* prayers as a part of celebrating the month of Ramaḍān, may God reward you)." The *ma'mūms* reply en masse: "*Al-ṣalāt lā ilāh illā Allāh* (Let's go to the prayer, there is no god but God)," after which they all perform the prayer together.<sup>187</sup>

Immediately after completing two *rak'ahs*, the *Tok Bilal* exclaims: "*Faḍlan min Allāh wa ni'mah* (This is a grace from God and His favour)," continued by the *ma'mūms*: "*Wa maghfiratan wa raḥmah, lā ilāha illā Allāhu waḥdahū lā sharīk lah,*

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<sup>185</sup>*Sunan al-Nasā'i*, "Kitāb Qiyām al-Lail," 1,588; *al-Musnad*, "Musnad al-Kūfiyīn," 17,676.

<sup>186</sup>Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata To' Hāji dan To' Lebai*, op.cit., p. 37; *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., pp. 4-6.

<sup>187</sup>Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata To' Hāji dan To' Lebai*, op.cit., p. 37; *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., pp. 4-6.

*lahu al-mulk wa lahu al-ḥamd wa huwa ʿalā kulli shayʿin qadīr* (Forgiveness and mercy, there is no god but God, the One who has no associate, to Him belongs the dominion and to Him belongs the praise, and He is able to do all things).” The *Tok Bilāl* then chants the blessing upon the Prophet: “*Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Muḥammad* (O God, bless upon Muḥammad),” and the *maʾmūms* reply: “*Ṣallā Allāh wa sallam ʿalayh* (may God bless and salute him).” The *Tok Bilāl* says again: “*Al-Badr al-munīr Muḥammad* (The shining full moon Muḥammad), and the *maʾmūms* respond loudly: “*Ṣallū ʿalayh* (ask blessing upon him),” and they stand up to continue the prayer. The same practice is repeated after they finish the sixth, tenth, fourteenth and eighteenth *rakʿahs* of the prayer.<sup>188</sup>

The routine is different after the completion of the fourth, eighth, twelfth, sixteenth and the twentieth *rakʿahs* of the prayer. At the end of these *rakʿahs*, the *Tok Bilāl* chants: “*Subḥan al-Malik al-Maʿbūd* (Glory be to the Worshipped King),” followed by the chanting of the *maʾmūms*: “*Subḥān al-Malik al-Mawjūd, subḥāna al-Malik al-Ḥayy alladhī lā yanām wa lā yamūt wa lā yafūt abadā. Subbūhun quddūsun rabba-nā wa rabb al-malāʾikat wa-al-Rūḥ. Subḥān Allāh wa al-ḥamd li-Allāh wa lā ilāha illā Allāh wa Allāh akbar, wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi-Allāh al-ʿAlī al-ʿAzīm* (Glory be to God, all praises be to God, there is no god but God, He is the Greatest, there is no power and no strength save in God the Most High the Most Great).” The *Tok Bilāl* then repeats the three blessings upon the Prophet as done before and the *maʾmūms* reply in the same way as mentioned before. Then the *Imām* recites a brief supplication<sup>189</sup> and the *maʾmūms* say “Amen” at his pauses. Afterwards, the *Tok Bilāl* mentions the names of the four Rightly Guided Caliphs, one after every four *rakʿahs*.<sup>190</sup> He chants, for example, after the fourth *rakʿah*: “*Al-khalīfat al-awwal amīr al-muʾminīn sayyidu-nā Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq* (The first Caliph leader of the believers, our

<sup>188</sup>Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata Toʻ Hāji dan Toʻ Lebai*, op.cit., pp. 38-42; *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., pp. 6-15.

<sup>189</sup>After completing the prayer twenty *rakʿahs*, the *Imām* normally recites the longer supplication.

<sup>190</sup>This begins with mentioning Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq after the fourth *rakʿah*, followed by ʿUmar b. al-Khaṭṭāb after the eighth *rakʿah*, ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān after the twelfth *rakʿah*, and ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib after the sixteenth *rakʿah*.



chief Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq), and the *ma'mūms* respond: "*Raḍiya Allāh 'anhu* (May God be pleased with him)." <sup>191</sup>

The twenty *rak'ahs* of *tarāwīḥ* prayers are normally followed by three *rak'ahs* of *witr* (odd) prayer to end the prayers for that night. To perform the *witr* prayer, when the *Imām* finishes his supplication, the *Tok Bilal* chants: "*Awtirū wa majjidū wa 'azzimū shahra-kum shahra al-ṣiyām raḥima-kum Allāh* (Observe the *witr* prayer, glorify and aggrandize your month, the month of fasting, may God show mercy to you)." From the night of the sixteenth of Ramaḍān onwards, the word "*wa-qnutū* (and do the *qunūt*)" is added after the word "*'azzimū*" to remind them to recite the *qunūt* in the last *rak'ah*, which they believe as recommended after the 15<sup>th</sup> night of Ramaḍān. The *ma'mūms* then reply in chorus: "*Al-ṣalāt lā ilāh illā Allāh* ((let's go to the prayer, there is no god but God)." The *Tok Bilal* then chants the blessing upon the Prophet three times and the *ma'mūms* reply in a similar fashion as mentioned previously. Once more, the *Tok Bilal* chants the final call to the prayer: "*Ṣalāt al-witr athāba-kum Allāh* (Observe the *witr* prayer, may God reward you)," and the *ma'mūms* reply: "*Al-ṣalāt lā ilāh illā Allāh* (Let's go to the prayer, there is no god but God)." <sup>192</sup>

After the *witr* prayer finishes, it is customary to chant the *dhikr munājāt* <sup>193</sup> collectively and enthusiastically, followed by the *tahlīl* up to a hundred times or more as they wish. <sup>194</sup> The *tarāwīḥ* prayers end when the *Imām* finishes reciting supplication after the *tahlīl*. After the prayer, they adjourn to enjoy the *moreh* <sup>195</sup> before starting the next activity in celebrating the night of Ramaḍān, i.e. the *tadarrus al-Qurān*, which normally ends at midnight.

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<sup>191</sup>When 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib is mentioned, the *ma'mūms* say: "*Karram Allāh wajhah* (May God honor him). See *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>192</sup>Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata To' Hāji dan To' Lebai*, op.cit., pp. 44-47; *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., pp. 29-36.

<sup>193</sup>It is to recite two times of "*Yā Laṭīf yā Kāfī, yā Ḥafīẓ yā Shāfī* (O the Most Kind, O Sufficer, O Guardian, O Curer), and once "*Yā Laṭīf yā Wāfī, yā Karīm anta Allāh* (O the Most Kind, O the Fulfiller [of the promise], O the Most Generous, you are God)." See Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata To' Hāji dan To' Lebai*, op.cit., p. 46; *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., p.32.

<sup>194</sup>Abdul Qadir Mandili, *Senjata To' Hāji dan To' Lebai*, op.cit., p. 46; *Solat Tarawih*, op.cit., p. 32.

<sup>195</sup>Foods and drinks specially prepared for those who participate in the *tarāwīḥ* prayers.



The traditionalists hold that chanting the *dhikr* and the blessing upon the Prophet in between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers in this particular way is to show their glorification of the month of Ramaḍān. As this month is considered as the greatest month for Muslims, a month of blessing and mercy in which Muslims are encouraged to multiply their *‘ibādah* and good deeds, it is important for them to seize this opportunity by performing any sort of *‘ibādah* as much as possible. Assembling together in the mosque at night observing the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, reciting the *dhikr*, asking for blessings upon the Prophet, reciting the *tahlīl*, and reciting the Qur’ān collectively are regarded by the traditionalists as means of celebrating the opportunity to gain reward in the nights of Ramaḍān, in addition to being a distinguishing mark (*shī‘ār*) of the religion. They further affirm that even if such a practice was unknown in the time of the Prophet, it can be done as there is no specific prohibition from the *naṣṣ*, and it is included in the general order to multiply the recommended deeds in the month of Ramaḍān.<sup>196</sup>

However, the reformists strongly denounce such a way of performing *tarāwīḥ* prayers, saying that this manner is a newly invented practice which was not prescribed by the Prophet, his Companions and the Pious Forefathers, and is not approved by any of the jurists.<sup>197</sup> Their condemnation regarding this matter is based on the following points:<sup>198</sup>

Firstly, reciting the *dhikr* and the blessing upon the Prophet is a good and recommended practice, but this way of performing it in between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, i.e. by chanting it en masse and loudly is against the ethics of *dhikr* and *dū‘ā’* taught by the Qur’ān and Prophetic traditions.<sup>199</sup> The reformists assert that according to the

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<sup>196</sup>Abdul Hayei Abdul Sukor, "Isu Bid'ah Tarawih: Satu Perhatian," in *Pengasuh*, issue no. 519 (April / Mei 1992), pp. 27-28.

<sup>197</sup>Abdul Ghani Azmi Idris, *Amalan Bid'ah*, op.cit., pp. 163-167; Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman ‘Ibādah Puasa*, op.cit., pp. 106-110; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol.1, pp. 234-237.

<sup>198</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman ‘Ibādah Puasa*, op.cit., pp. 106-110; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol.1, pp. 234-237.

<sup>199</sup>See the reformists' earlier argumentation on the subject of uttering the intention prior to performing prayers.

Prophetic traditions, raising the voice en masse in reciting *dhikr* is permitted on three occasions only, namely, when reciting *talbiyah* during the *ḥajj* and *ʿumrah*; chanting the *takbīr* during *ʿīd* days; and uttering the *takbīr* during battle.<sup>200</sup>

Secondly, the reformists argue, the chanting of certain *dhikrs* and blessings upon the Prophet in between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers as done by the traditionalists was never practised nor instructed by the Prophet, his Companions and the Pious Forefathers. Placing it in between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers is therefore a *bidʿah*, for if it was recommended, the Prophet would have practised or instructed it before. The Prophet had meticulously taught the ways of all *ʿibādah*, and nobody should add to or lessen them, or create a new form of *ʿibādāh*. The Prophet said concerning this matter: "O people, there is nothing that brings you close to Paradise and keeps you away from Hell, except I have instructed you to do it. And there is nothing that brings you close to Hell and keeps you away from Paradise, except I have prohibited you from it."<sup>201</sup> With regard to the traditionalists' argument that there is no specific prohibition from the *naṣṣ* concerning this matter, the reformists' answer to that is even if there is no specific prohibition, this practice was never done by the Prophet, and this omission is a *sunnah* which should be followed by the *ummah*.<sup>202</sup>

Thirdly, the reformists hold that raising the voice en masse in the mosque, even if for the purpose of *ʿibādah*, is prohibited by the religion as the mosque is a place of tranquility for worshipping God. This is indicated by several Prophetic traditions, such as the following traditions: ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar said that the Prophet was observing *iʿtikāf* (seclusion in the mosque for the remembrance of God) during the last ten nights of Ramaḍān, and a small house made from date palm leaves was built for him. One night he stretched his head out saying: "O people, when the worshipper (*muṣallī*) is praying, he is conversing with (*yunājī*) his Blessed and Exalted Lord. So, everybody must know that he is conversing with his Lord, and do not raise your voices

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<sup>200</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman ʿIbādah Puasa*, op.cit., p. 107.

<sup>201</sup>Tradition narrated by al-Baghawī, as cited in A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 237.

<sup>202</sup>Abdul Ghani Azmi Idris, *Amalan Bid'ah*, op.cit., p. 253.

above each other.”<sup>203</sup> Al-Bayyāḍ narrated that the Prophet came out to the people when they were praying and raising their voices in the recitation (of the Qur’ān). He said: “The worshipper is conversing with his Lord, then concentrate on what is conversed and don’t raise your voices over each other (in the recitation of) the Qur’ān.”<sup>204</sup> Al- Sā’ib b. Yazīd said: “I was standing in the mosque and somebody threw a stone at me. I looked around and found that it was ‘Umar bin Al-Khattab. He said to me: “Fetch those two men to me.” When I did, he said to them: “Who are you?” They replied: “We are from Ta’if.” ‘Umar said: “If you were from this country (Madīnah) I would have punished you for raising your voices in the mosque of the Messenger of God.”<sup>205</sup>

Based on this prohibition, the reformists maintain that raising the voice when performing the *tarāwīḥ* prayers in the mosque as done by the traditionalists could lead to committing a sin as they breach the code of conduct (*adāb*) when in a mosque.<sup>206</sup> Furthermore, the reformists assert, chanting *dhikr* and *du‘ā’* en masse in the mosque is dangerously similar to the practice of the Christians who used to chant their prayers together and loudly in the church, while resemblance to other religion is prohibited by Islam as the Prophet said: “Whoever resembles a group of people, is one of them.”<sup>207</sup> Therefore, they affirm, it is important to perform the *tarāwīḥ* prayers in their proper and original way.<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>203</sup> *Al-Musnad*, “Musnad al-Mukthirīn min al-Ṣaḥābah,” 5,853.

<sup>204</sup> *Al-Muwatṭa’*, “Kitāb al-Nidā’ li al-Ṣalāh,” 163.

<sup>205</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, “Kitāb al-Ṣalāh,” 450.

<sup>206</sup> Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman ‘Ibādah Puasa*, op.cit., p. 108.

<sup>207</sup> See *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, “Kitāb al-Libās,” 3,512; *al-Musnad*, “Musnad al-Mukthirīn min al-Ṣaḥābah,” 4,868, 4,869, 5,409.

<sup>208</sup> Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pedoman ‘Ibādah Puasa*, op.cit., p. 107.

## Perceptions Concerning the *Ḥajj* (Pilgrimage)

### The *Miqāt Makānī* (Appointed Location)

The *miqāt* (pl. *mawāqīt*) *makānī* is a special point which is designated for setting the *niyyah* (intention) of commencing the *ḥajj* and performing the rites of entering into the state of *iḥrām*<sup>209</sup> (ritual purification). There are several locations specified by the Prophet as the *mawāqīt* of *ḥajj*. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrated that Ibn<sup>c</sup> Abbās said: "The Prophet designated Dhū al-Ḥulayfah the *miqāt* for the people of Madīnah; al-Juḥfah for the people of Shām; Qarn al-Manāzil for the people of Najd; and Yalamlam for the people of Yaman. These *mawāqīt* are for the people in those places, and for those who come through those places to perform the *ḥajj* and *ʿumrah* (lesser pilgrimage). And whoever lives within these boundaries can perform *iḥrām* from the place he lives; and the people of Makkah can perform *iḥrām* from Makkah."<sup>210</sup> In another tradition narrated by Muslim on the authority of Jābir, there is an addition: "For the people of Iraq it (the *miqāt*) is Dhāt ʿIrq."<sup>211</sup> For the pilgrims from Malaysia who travel by air to Makkah from the east, the *miqāt* applicable for them as understood from the tradition is Qarn al-Manāzil.

However, the majority of the Malaysian pilgrims do not travel directly to Mecca to perform *ḥajj*, but travel to Madīnah first for the *ziyārah* (visit) to the Prophet's Mosque and other historical places, staying there for several days or a few weeks, and then continue their journey to Makkah to perform *ḥajj* by going into *iḥrām* from Dhū al-Ḥulayfah, the *miqāt* assigned for the people of Madīnah and those who come from the north. This involves those pilgrims on the early flights, who normally travel before the beginning of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijjah, under the service of the Tabung Haji

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<sup>209</sup> *Iḥrām* is the ceremonial status of the pilgrim from the moment he starts his *ḥajj* and puts on the *ḥajj* garment, until he completes all the *ḥajj* rites and is released from the *ḥajj* restrictions. In this state, he is described as *muḥrim*. *Iḥrām* also refers to the forming of intention for *ḥajj* in addition to denoting the *ḥajj* garment.

<sup>210</sup> Al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 295.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

(Pilgrims Fund).<sup>212</sup> Those travelling later go to Makkah directly after landing in Jeddah and go into *iḥrām* from Qarn al-Manāzil. The practice of going into *iḥrām* from Dhū al-Ḥulayfah, the *mīqāt* that is not originally assigned for Malaysian pilgrims, and relinquishing their original *mīqāt*, has been a subject of disputation between the traditionalists and reformists.

The traditionalists hold that such a practice is permissible, as the pilgrims travelling first to Madīnah have not really set the intention of performing *ḥajj* yet, but only have an intention of *ziyārah*. Moreover, the course of their journey is towards Madīnah, not Makkah, and it does not pass the *mīqāt* of Qarn al-Manāzil. Thus, they do not need to go into *iḥrām* from Qarn al-Manāzil, and they are not liable for *dam* (atonement by slaughtering an animal), as there is no reason for that. This is the viewpoint adopted by the Tabung Haji.

The reformists hold that relinquishing the original *mīqāt* and starting the *iḥrām* from another *mīqāt* is not permissible and will be liable for *dam*, as stated by Mālik.<sup>213</sup> They assert that from the beginning the basic intention of the pilgrims is to perform the *ḥajj*, together with *‘umrah* if they wish. Thus, they must follow all the *ḥajj manāsik* (rites) instructed by the Prophet starting from their departure from home until the end of the *manāsik*, and this includes starting the *iḥrām* from the *mīqāt* assigned by the Prophet for them.<sup>214</sup> As the intention of the pilgrims is to perform the *ḥajj* in Makkah, they should travel directly to Makkah by doing the *iḥrām* from Qarn al-Manāzil, and *ziyārah* to Madīnah can be performed after the *ḥajj manāsik* finish. Travelling to Madīnah first for *ziyārah* is a deviation from the original intention and causes the changing of the *mīqāt* which is liable for *dam*. They perceive no reason for not travelling to Makkah directly. If early arrival at Makkah causes difficulties of being

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<sup>212</sup>Tabung Haji or its full name Lembaga Urusan dan Tabung Haji (Pilgrims Management and Fund Board) is a government-owned corporation established to provide *ḥajj* management and service for Muslims of Malaysia. For brief overview on Tabung Haji, see for example, Awang Had Saleh, "Modern Concept Of Hajj Management: The Experience of Malaysia," in Ziauddin Sardar and M. A. Zaki Badawi (eds.), *Hajj Studies* (London : Croom Helm, n. d.), vol. 1, pp. 73-86.

<sup>213</sup>Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 325.

<sup>214</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 16-17.

in *iḥrām* for a long time, it can be solved by performing *tamattuʿ ḥajj* which releases them from *iḥrām* after completing an *ʿumrah*.<sup>215</sup> However, the Tabung Haji shows no interest in this standpoint, resulting in the reformists choosing later flights in order to avoid a change of *mīqāt*.

### *Ṭawāf al-Ifāḍah*<sup>216</sup> for the *Qārin*<sup>217</sup>

*Ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* is an indispensable part of the *ḥajj* without which the *ḥajj* is invalid, and that is the one referred to in Qurʾān 22: 29: "Then let them complete the prescribed duties for them, and perform their vows, and circumambulate the ancient House (the Kaʿbah)." Further, according to the jurists, no atonement is acceptable in its place. The jurists agree that the *mutamattiʿ* is obliged to perform two *ṭawāf al-ifāḍahs*: one for the *ʿumrah* and one for the *ḥajj* on the day of sacrifice (*yawm al-naḥr* - 10<sup>th</sup> Dhū al-Ḥijjah), and they also agree that the *mufrid* is obliged to perform only one *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*, on the day of sacrifice. Nonetheless, they disagree about the *qārin*, whether he is obliged to perform one *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* or two. The majority of the jurists, which includes Mālik, al-Shāfiʿī, Aḥmad and Ibn Ḥazm maintain that one *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* is sufficient for the *qārin*, and this was also the opinion of Ibn ʿUmar and Jābir.<sup>218</sup> Furthermore, Mālik, al-Shāfiʿī and Aḥmad maintain that the *ṭawāf al-*

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<sup>215</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>216</sup>*Ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* literally means the circumambulation of pouring forth, named after the pouring of pilgrims from Mina to the Kaʿbah to perform the obligatory circumambulation on ʾĪd al-Aḍḥā after throwing pebbles at the Jamrat al-ʿAqabah. See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 146.

<sup>217</sup>*Qārin* is a person who undertakes the *qirān* form of *ḥajj*. *Qirān* is one of the three forms of the performance of *ḥajj*. The other two forms are *tamattuʿ* (a person performing this is called *mutamattiʿ*) and *ifrād* (a person performing this is called *mufrid*). *Qirān* is performing the *ḥajj* and the *ʿumrah* by combining them together simultaneously; while *tamattuʿ* is performing the *ḥajj* and the *ʿumrah* by commencing the *ʿumrah* first then the *ḥajj* in the month of *ḥajj*; and *ifrād* is performing the *ḥajj* only, but the *ʿumrah* can be performed after the *ḥajj* finishes. See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 215-222.

<sup>218</sup>See Ibn Rushd, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 344; aql-Sharbīnī al-Khaṭīb, *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 514; Ibn Qudāmah, *al-Mughnī*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 465; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥalla* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿah al-Imām, n.d.), vol. 7, p. 173.



*ifāḍah* must be performed after the *wuqūf* (vigil) at ‘Arafah, i.e on the day of sacrifice or after that. Ibn Ḥazm, however, and some other jurists maintain that the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* is accomplished by the first *ṭawāf* (*al-ṭawāf al-awwal*).<sup>219</sup> In Malaysia, a group of reformists have adopted the latter position, and this has resulted in a great dispute between them and the traditionalists when a religious authority released a *fatwā* that opposed this standpoint.

In August 1987 (Dhū al-Ḥijjah 1407H) a group of 54 pilgrims from the state of Perlis, led by the reformist scholar, Ramli Ahmad, had performed the *qirān ḥajj* by performing the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* (which they prefer to call obligatory *ṭawāf*, as the term *al-ifāḍah* is not applicable in this case) for the *ḥajj* and *‘umrah* before the *wuqūf* at ‘Arafah, or to be specific, on their arrival at Makkah. Consequently, the state’s Religious Affairs Council released a *fatwā* proclaiming that their *ḥajj* was not complete, and void if the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* was not made up before their death.<sup>220</sup> The second *fatwā* was released afterwards mentioning that anyone who did not perform *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* after the *wuqūf* is still in the ritual state of *iḥrām* and bound by the prohibitions of *iḥrām*.<sup>221</sup> This issue became serious when it was disseminated by the media which portrayed that group of pilgrims as if they had really done wrong, without leaving them to defend their position.<sup>222</sup> However, in early 1989, a book was published to counter the *fatwā* and defend their practice of *ḥajj*.<sup>223</sup>

Defending their argumentation, the reformists insist that it is sufficient for the

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<sup>219</sup>Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Muḥalla*, op.cit., vol. 7, pp. 173-176.

<sup>220</sup>See Majlis Agama Islam Perlis, "Keputusan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Sharīyah Negeri Perlis, Perkara Ṭawāf Ifāḍah Sebelum Waktu Wuqūf Arafah," 1988.

<sup>221</sup>See Majlis Agama Islam Perlis, "Keputusan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Sharīyah Negeri Perlis, Tentang Ṭawāf Ifāḍah Dan Larangannya," December 1989.

<sup>222</sup>See newspapers reports on this case, for example, "50 Jemaah Haji Perlis Tahun Lalu Diisytihar Tak Sah," in *Berita Harian*, 24 May 1988; "54 Tak Sah Haji Kerana Tawaf Ifazah di Perlis," in *Berita Harian*, 6 Sept 1988, "Isu Sembahyang Raya Di Dua Tempat Dan Fardu Haji Tak Sah dibangkitkan Di Dewan," in *Utusan Malaysia*, 28 May 1988; "Kerjakan Tawaf Ifazah Sebelum Wuquf Berdosa Jika Kahwin - Datuk Abdul Kadir," in *Utusan Malaysia*, 26 May 1988.

<sup>223</sup>This book, titled *Hajji Qiran, Benarkah 54 Orang Jama'ah Hajji Negeri Perlis Tidak Sah Hajjinya?* is written by Hashim Ghani, a reformist scholar of Negeri Sembilan who is a close friend of Ramli Ahmad, a scholar who led those 54 pilgrims.

*qārin* to perform only one obligatory *ṭawāf*, and that this can be accomplished on arrival in Makkah (which also can be called *ṭawāf al-quḍūm* - arrival circumambulation). This means that the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* is regarded as having been accomplished by the first *ṭawāf*, i.e. *ṭawāf al-quḍūm*, and the *qārin* does not need to perform it anymore on the day of sacrifice or after that.<sup>224</sup> They base their opinion on several proofs, including various traditions and jurists opinions.<sup>225</sup> Among them is the tradition narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim from ʿĀʾishah who said:<sup>226</sup>

"We went out with the Prophet during the farewell *ḥajj* (*ḥajjat al-wadʿ*) and we went into *iḥrām* for *ʿumrah*. Then the Prophet said to us: "Whoever has got a sacrificial animal (*hady*) should go into *iḥrām* for *ḥajj* and *ʿumrah* and should not come out of *iḥram* until he has performed both (*ḥajj* and *ʿumrah*)." I arrived at Makkah along with him while I was menstruating, so I did not perform the *ṭawāf* around the Kaʿbah or (*saʿy*) between Ṣafā and Marwah. I informed the Prophet about that and he said, "Undo your braids and comb your hair, and then perform the *iḥram* for *ḥajj* and leave the *ʿumrah*." I did so, and when we performed and finished the *ḥajj*, the Prophet sent me to al-Tanʿīm along with (my brother) ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Abu Bakr to perform the *ʿumrah*. The Prophet said, "This *ʿumrah* is in lieu of your missed *ʿumrah*." Those who had undertaken the *iḥrām* for *ʿumrah*, performed the *ṭawāf* around the Kaʿbah and *saʿy* between Ṣafā and Marwah, and then came out of *iḥram*, and on their return from Minā, they performed another *ṭawāf*. But those who combined their *ḥajj* and *ʿumrah* performed only one *ṭawāf*."

Based on the above tradition, the reformists maintain, quoting also the standpoint of al-Nawawī, al-Qaṣṭallānī and Ibn Ḥajar, that in the Farewell *Ḥajj*, the Prophet performed the *qirān ḥajj* and performed only one *ṭawāf* for the *ḥajj* and *ʿumrah*.<sup>227</sup> This *ṭawāf* was in fact performed on his arrival in Makkah before the *wuqūf* at ʿArafah, as indicated in the tradition of Ibn ʿUmar:<sup>228</sup>

Ibn ʿUmar intended to perform *ḥajj* in the year when al-Ḥajjāj attacked Ibn al-Zubayr. Somebody said to Ibn ʿUmar: "There is a danger of an impending

<sup>224</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Hajji Qiran* (Kuala Pilah: KTF Institut, 1989), pp. 28-29, 109.

<sup>225</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 28-108.

<sup>226</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Ḥajj," 1,530, 1,534; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ḥajj," 2,108.

<sup>227</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Hajji Qiran*, op.cit., p. 20.

<sup>228</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, Kitāb al-Ḥajj," 1,532; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ḥajj," 2,166; *al-Musnad*, "Musnad al-Mukthirīn min al-Ṣaḥābah," 6,102.

war between them." Ibn 'Umar said: "Verily, in God's Messenger you have a good example to follow. I would do the same as the Messenger had done. I make you witness that I have decided to perform 'umrah." Then he went out and when he reached al-Baydā', he said: "The ceremonies of both ḥajj and 'umrah are similar. I make you witness that I have made ḥajj compulsory for me along with 'umrah." He drove (to Makkah) a sacrificial animal which he had bought at Qudayd. He then departed by performing the iḥrām for both of them (ḥajj and 'umrah). When he arrived in Makkah, he performed ṭawāf around the House (Ka'bah) and (sa'y) between Ṣafā and Marwah, and did not do more than that. He did not slaughter the sacrificial animal, or shave or cut short his hair, or finish his iḥrām until the day of sacrifice. Then he slaughtered his sacrificial animal and shaved his head. He considered the first ṭawāf as sufficient for the ḥajj and 'umrah. Ibn 'Umar said: "That was how the Messenger of God performed it."

The reformists assert that this tradition clearly shows that Ibn 'Umar, who exemplified the *hajj manāsik* of the Prophet, did not perform ṭawāf *al-ifāḍah* after the *wuqūf* i.e. on the day of sacrifice, but only performed the ṭawāf on his arrival at Makkah, and he regarded it as sufficient for both ḥajj and 'umrah. There is another tradition that supports this fact:<sup>229</sup>

Wabarah reported: While I was sitting in the company of Ibn 'Umar, a man came to him and said: "Is it right for me to circumambulate the House before I come to stay (at 'Arafah)?" Ibn 'Umar said: "Yes." The man said: "Ibn 'Abbās, however, says: "Do not circumambulate the House until you come to stay at 'Arafah."" Ibn 'Umar replied: "God's Messenger performed the ḥajj and circumambulated the House before coming to stay (at 'Arafah). If you say the truth, is it more rightful to follow the saying of the Prophet or the words of Ibn 'Abbās?"

There is another tradition of Ibn 'Umar narrated by al-Shawkānī which says that "He (Ibn 'Umar) considered that he had accomplished the ṭawāf for ḥajj and 'umrah by performing the first ṭawāf, i.e. the one that he performed on the day of sacrifice for *ifāḍah*."<sup>230</sup> The reformists clarify this by referring to Ibn Ḥajar's words in his *Fath al-Bārī*,<sup>231</sup> where he states that some jurists presumed that the first ṭawāf meant in the tradition is ṭawāf *al-qudūm* that is followed by the sa'y between Ṣafā and Marwah.

<sup>229</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Ḥajj," 2, 170; Sunan al-Nasā'ī, "Kitāb Manāsik al-Ḥajj," 2880.

<sup>230</sup>Al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awtār*, vol. 5, p. 78.

<sup>231</sup>Ibn Ḥajar al-Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī bi-Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* (Cairo: Dār al-Mārifah, n.d.), vol. 3, 396.

Quoting Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, he explains: “This tradition has been an argument for Mālik that *ṭawāf al-qudūm* which is followed by *ṣāʿy* can be a valid substitute for the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* if the pilgrim has not performed the latter due to his ignorance or forgetfulness until he has returned to his homeland, but he is liable for *dam*.” Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr then comments: “If the first *ṭawāf* is considered as the *ṭawāf al-qudūm*, it can take the place of *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*, and this indicates that the *ṭawāf al-qudūm* is an absolute substitute for *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*. This means that the pilgrims can purposely omit the latter, without being subject to the reasons of ignorance or forgetfulness, and without being subject to the supposition that *ṭawāf al-qudūm* is *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* on the day of sacrifice, or *ṣāʿy*.”<sup>232</sup> Furthermore, to strengthen their argumentation, they convey the words of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bannā in his *al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī*, the commentary of *al-Musnad*, regarding the practice of Ibn ʿUmar. Al-Bannā maintains: “For the *qārin*, *ṭawāf al-qudūm* is sufficient to replace *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*, and that is what is meant by the phrase of ‘he performed *ṭawāf* for the *ḥajj* and *ʿumrah* once.’”<sup>233</sup>

Regarding the tradition mentioning that “the Prophet performed *ifāḍah* (*afāḍa*) on the day of sacrifice and then came back and performed the *Zuḥr* prayer at Minā,”<sup>234</sup> they assert that the word *afāḍa* in the tradition should be interpreted in its lexical meaning, i.e. “departed from Muzdalifah to Makkah,” and not be understood as “performed the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*”. This is because if it is interpreted as “performed the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*,” it contradicts the previous traditions of Ibn ʿUmar.<sup>235</sup>

The traditionalists strongly denounce this standpoint saying that performing the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* before the *wuqūf* is an inversion of the *manāṣik* of *ḥajj* and is not allowed in Islamic teaching. They are liable for *dam* as they did not abide by the order (*tartīb*) of the *manāṣik* of *ḥajj*, and they must make up the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* after the

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<sup>232</sup>Ibid., see in Hashim Ghani, *Hajji Qiran* pp. 85-86, 99-100.

<sup>233</sup>See Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bannā, *al-Fatḥ al-Rabbānī Tartīb Musnad al-Imām Aḥmad* (Cairo: Dār al-Shihāb, n.d.), vol. 21, p. 171; or in Hashim Ghani, *Hajji Qiran* op.cit., pp. 71-72, 100-101.

<sup>234</sup>Narrated also by Ibn ʿUmar. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, “Kitāb al-Ḥajj,” 1,210.

<sup>235</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Hajji Qiran*, op.cit., pp. 27, 102.

*wuqūf* on another occasion before coming out of *iḥrām*.<sup>236</sup> In the *fatwā* delivered by the *muftī* of Perlis, Mat Jahya Husain, he clarifies that the first *ṭawāf* performed by the Prophet was *ṭawāf al-quḍūm*, not *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*. The Prophet performed the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* after the *wuqūf* at ʿArafah. He bases the *fatwā* on several proofs. The first proof is a verse of the Qurʾān: "Then let them complete the prescribed duties for them, and perform their vows, and circumambulate the ancient House (the Kaʿbah)." This verse indicates the sequences of the *manāsik* of *ḥajj*, by which the *ṭawāf* is placed last, and this denies the possibility of *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* being replaced by the *ṭawāf al-quḍūm* because the latter is performed at the beginning of the *manāsik* of *ḥajj*, i.e. on arrival in Makkah. The second proof is the tradition of Ibn ʿUmar who narrated that "the Prophet performed *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* (*afāḍa*) on the day of sacrifice and then came back and performed the *Zuḥr* prayer at Minā." Unlike the reformists, the *muftī* interpretes the word "*afāḍa*" in the tradition as "performed *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*," not "departed from Muzdalifah to Makkah." The third proof is what he claims as the consensus of the jurists, including the four leaders of the *madhāhib* who all hold that the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* must be performed after the *wuqūf*, and that this is a condition of its validity.<sup>237</sup>

The *fatwā* also explains that the phrase "first *ṭawāf*" mentioned in the tradition of Ibn ʿUmar (that he accomplished the *ṭawāf* for the *ḥajj* and ʿ*umrah* by the first *ṭawāf*) means the one he performed on the day of sacrifice, and this has been indicated in another tradition mentioned by al-Shawkānī in his *Nayl al-Awṭār*: "He (Ibn ʿUmar) considered that he had accomplished the *ṭawāf* for the *ḥajj* and ʿ*umrah* by performing the first *ṭawāf*, i.e. the one that he performed on the day of sacrifice for *ifāḍah*." If it is said that *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* can be performed before the *wuqūf*, this contradicts the previous tradition stating that the Prophet performed the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* on the day of sacrifice. He then concludes that the pilgrims who did not perform the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* after the *wuqūf* have not completed their *ḥajj*, and they

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<sup>236</sup>See the opinion of Abdul Kadir Talib, the Mufti of Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, in "Kerjakan Tawaf Ifazah Sebelum Wuquf Berdosa Jika Kahwin - Datuk Abdul Kadir," in *Utusan Malaysia*, 26 May 1988.

<sup>237</sup>See Majlis Agama Islam Perlis, "Keputusan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Sharʿiyah Negeri Perlis, Perkara Ṭawāf Ifāḍah Sebelum Waktu Wuqūf Arafah," 1988.



must therefore perform the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* again after the *wuqūf*. If they do not perform it until they die, their *ḥajj* is void.<sup>238</sup>

In another *fatwā*, it was decided that the pilgrims who did not perform the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* after the *wuqūf* at <sup>6</sup>Arafah, had not achieved the second *taḥallul* (freedom from the restrictions of *iḥrām*).<sup>239</sup> Therefore, they are still being prohibited from doing six matters regarding women, namely: (i) marrying (ii) contracting marriage, (iii) proposing marriage, (iv) having sexual intercourse and its preliminaries, (v) being guardian of marriage, and (vi) being representative of guardian of marriage. The *fatwā* concludes that for all types of *ḥajj*, viz. *tamattuʿ*, *ifrād* and *qirān*, *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* must be performed after the *wuqūf* at <sup>6</sup>Arafah.<sup>240</sup>

After the release of the *fatwā*, the group of 54 pilgrims were strongly condemned by the public. The leader of this group, Ramli Ahmad, was severely criticised by the traditionalists who said that he was not a learned man but pretending to be a scholar, and even worse, he was labelled by the former *muftī* of Kuala Lumpur, Abdul Kadir Talib, as a companion of *iblis* who tried to damage the <sup>6</sup>*ibādah* of Muslims.<sup>241</sup> However, this group (except for 5 of them who accepted the *fatwā* and repeated the *ḥajj* in the following year) rejected and challenged the *fatwā* saying that the *fatwā* was released without being meticulously researched, and they urged the Council to retract the *fatwā*. A series of discussions between both parties have been held, but only reached deadlock as both are convinced about their respective standpoints.

It is worthy to note that not all reformists agree with the practice of this

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<sup>238</sup>See Majlis Agama Islam Perlis, "Perkara Ṭawāf Ifāḍah Sebelum Waktu Wuqūf Arafah," 1988.

<sup>239</sup>The *taḥallul* is of two types: (i) The *taḥallul awwal* or *taḥallul aṣghar* (first or minor freedom) which occurs after the casting of pebbles at the Jamrat al-<sup>6</sup>Aqabah. This is a partial freedom, by which the pilgrims are free from the restrictions of *iḥrām* except, according to the majority of jurists, matters related to women; (ii) The *taḥallul thānī* or *taḥallul akbar* (second or major freedom), which occurs after the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah*. This is a full freedom by which the pilgrims are free from all restrictions of *iḥrām*. See Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 229.

<sup>240</sup>Majlis Agama Islam Perlis, "Ṭawāf Ifāḍah Dan Larangannya," 1989.

<sup>241</sup>See the remark of Abdul Kadir Talib, the Muftī of Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur, in "Kerjakan Tawaf Ifazah Sebelum Wuquf Berdosa Jika Kahwin - Datuk Abdul Kadir," in *Utusan Malaysia*, 26 May 1988.



group. There was also a disagreement among the reformists regarding this issue. Most of the reformists hold that they should follow the strongest and the best standpoint among the *madhhabs* in matters where there are disputes, as they always do. In this issue, the group of 54 reformist pilgrims, according to most reformists, seem to have followed a weak viewpoint among the *madhhabs*, and this considered is an irregular practice. This has broken their consistency in choosing the best opinion of the *madhhabs* and open a door of criticism from their opponent, i.e. the traditionalists. However, the great majority of reformists did not denounce the practice of that group, as they believe that the group has followed a practice that has a basis from the *sunnah* of the Prophet. They maintain that though the practice is permissible as approved by some scholars, it is better anyway for them not to choose a weak opinion of the jurists.

## Matters Related to the Deceased

Death is considered as the last milestone in a Muslim's worldly life and a gateway to the hereafter. His luck or fate in the hereafter is subject to his deeds in his worldly life, and he has no more opportunity to get rewards except from three sources as stated in the Prophetic tradition:<sup>242</sup> "When a man dies, his actions come to an end, except for three: an ongoing charity (*ṣadaqah jāriyah*); or knowledge by which people benefit; or a pious son who prays for him (the deceased)." In the traditional Malay world, after the deceased has been buried, there are several practices established to "assist" the deceased in his new life, which are usually practised in two forms: (i) assisting the deceased to answer the questions from the angels in his grave, which is called *talqīn* (instructing), which is performed immediately after the burial, on his grave; (ii) contributing to the reward of the deceased by performing certain acts of *ʿibādah* or *ṣadaqah* (charity), and making up his omitted obligations. Comprised in the

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<sup>242</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Waṣīyyah," 3,084; Sunan al-Tirmidhī, "Kitāb al-Aḥkām," 1,297.

latter are the ceremony of *tahlīl* (chanting the phrase *lā ilāha illa Allah*), the *kenduri arwah* (feast of the deceased), reciting the Qur'ān on the grave, *sedekah fatihah* (contributing the reward of reciting the *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*), paying the *fidyah* (ransom) for missed prayers and others. All these practices are widely practised by the traditionalists but are strongly denounced by the reformists. Discussion on this matter can be summarized as follows:

## The *Talqān* after Burial

The *talqān* (Malay *talkin*) is a prayer recited to calm the deceased and instruct him to answer rightly the questions propounded by the angels of the grave, namely, Munkar and Nakir, regarding the matters of his faith. According to the traditionalists, the *talqān* is recommended or desirable (*mustaḥabb*),<sup>243</sup> and this is indicated in the tradition narrated by al-Ṭabarānī from Abū Umāmah who said:<sup>244</sup>

"When I die, do to me as the Prophet had instructed us. He (the Prophet) said: 'When one of your brothers dies, and you have levelled the ground on his grave, let one of you stand by the head of the grave and say, "O *fulān* b. *fulānah*." Indeed, he is listening but cannot answer. Then say again, "O *fulān* b. *fulānah*." He is listening but still cannot answer. Then say again, "O *fulān* b. *fulānah*," and he answers, "Yes, guide me, may God show mercy to you," but you do not notice that. Then say, "remember the state in which you left this world, i.e. witnessing that there is no god but God, and that Muḥammad is His servant and His messenger; and that I am pleased with God as a Lord, and with Islām as a religion, and with Muḥammad as a Prophet, and with Qur'ān as a guidance, and with Ka'bah as a *qiblah*, and with the believers as brothers; and that Paradise is true, Hell is true, the resurrection is true, the Hour is coming, there is no doubt about it, and that God will resurrect those who are in the graves." Munkar and Nakir then hold each other's hands and say: "Let us go, what is there to keep us beside someone who has been instructed his argument." A man asked the Prophet: 'O Messenger of God, how if his mother is unknown?' The Prophet replied: 'He is related to his mother Ḥawwā' (thus he is called): O *fulān* b. Ḥawwā' (Eve)'"

<sup>243</sup>Daud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 28; Muḥammad Arshad al-Banjārī, *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn*, op.cit., vol. 2., p. 84; Muḥammad Ismail Daud Fatani, *Maṭla' al-Badrayn*, p. 54.

<sup>244</sup>Quoted in Dāwud Fatani, *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 28-29. Narrated also by<sup>c</sup> Abd al-<sup>c</sup> Azīz al-Ḥanbalī, see al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 89-90.

In practising the *talqīn*, as soon as the filling in of the grave is completed, the *imām* or a religious teacher sits on the square mat by the head of the grave, and starts reciting the *talqīn*, while the people who circle the grave listen to it and say "Amen" when the *imām* chants the *duʿaʿ* at the end of the *talqīn*. The *talqīn* is recited in Arabic or Malay and contains mainly the instructions and guides for the dead to answer the questions by the angels. The instructions recited are more than those that are stated in the Abū Umāmah's tradition, and thus, it normally takes about half an hour to finish the *talqīn*.<sup>245</sup> The *talqīn* can be recited repeatedly in one occasion if the dead man's relatives wish, and a certain sum is customarily paid to the *imām* who recites the *talqīn*. The *talqīn* is usually followed by the chanting of *tahlīl* and prayer for the deceased.<sup>246</sup> For the traditionalists, the *talqīn* is not only for the benefit of the deceased, but also benefits the living people to remember death and to be prepared for it.

The practice of *talqīn* is nevertheless denounced by the reformists who hold that it is a *bidʿah madhmūmah* as it is not prescribed either in the Qurʾān, nor in the *sunnah*, nor by the leaders of the four *madhhab*s.<sup>247</sup> The tradition of Abū Umāmah is considered by them as not authentic (*ghayr ṣaḥīḥ*) as stated by numerous traditionists, such as al-Nawawī, Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, ʿIzz al-Dīn b. ʿAbd al-Salām, Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, al-Ṣanʿānī, and others. Al-Ṣanʿānī says in his *Subul al-Salām*: "The traditionists have meticulously investigated the tradition of *talqīn* and found that it is weak. Practising the *talqīn* is a *bidʿah*, and one should not be confused because many people practise it."<sup>248</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī remarks that he does not know a group of narrators of this

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<sup>245</sup>See full text of *talqīn* in Arabic and Malay, for example, in ʿAlī Baldram, *Perukunan*, op.cit., pp. 145-154.

<sup>246</sup>Muhammad Ariff Ahmad, *Bicara Tentang Adat dan Tradisi* (Singapore: Pustaka Nasional, 1993), p. 106; Alwi b. Sheikh Alhady, *Malay Customs and Traditions* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1962), p. 58.

<sup>247</sup>Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin, *Penebas Bidʿah*, p. 32; Dr. Ruhani, *Revolusi Mental Ahli Ibadah* (Kota Bharu: Pustaka ASA, second ed., 1985), p. 61; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 212, vol. 3, pp. 975-976.

<sup>248</sup>Muḥammad al-Amīr al-Ṣarf ānī, *Subul al-Salām Sharḥ Bulūgh al-Marām* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Ḥalabī, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 161.

tradition, and therefore it is considered weak.<sup>249</sup> Logically, the reformists state, if the Prophet had ever instructed the *talqān*, it would have been widely known and practised among his Companions, but it seems to be unknown among them. The leaders of the four *madhhabs*, except Aḥmad, also did not say anything about the *talqān* after burial, and it remained unknown until the third century of the Hijrah, when it was practised by small number of people. According to Aḥmad, he did not know who practised the *talqān* except a group of people of Syria who did it when Abū al-Mughīrah died.<sup>250</sup> Furthermore, they emphasize, quoting al-Nawawī's words in *al-Majmūʿ*, that Abū Umāmah is reported to have narrated the tradition during his death-throes (*nazaʿ*), i.e. not in a normal situation, and thus, its validity is questionable.<sup>251</sup>

Besides the invalidity of the tradition of *talqān*, the reformists base their standpoint on several other reasons. They affirm that the practice of *talqān* contradicts the distinct meaning hinted at in the Qur'ān that nobody can teach or instruct the dead. The Qur'ān states: "Nor are the living and the dead (alike). Verily, God makes whom He will hear, but you cannot make hear those who are in the graves (35: 22); "Verily, you cannot make the dead to hear, nor can you make the deaf to hear the call, when they flee, turning their backs" (27: 80). The Qur'ān in another place states: "And of no effect is the repentance of those who continue to do evil deeds until death faces one of them and he says: 'Now I repent'" (5: 18). The reformists maintain, if repentance prior to death is rejected, any instructions to guide the deceased to the truth after his death would be more worthless. They further argue, if the *talqān* can benefit the deceased Muslim, it would also benefit the dead disbeliever, and it should be recited for him, as there is no difference between the two in terms of observing the instructions.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār*, op.cit., vol. 4, p. 90.

<sup>250</sup> Ibid., vol. 4: 90.

<sup>251</sup> Dr. Ruhani, *Revolusi Mental*, op.cit., pp. 64-65; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 213, vol 3, pp. 976-977.

<sup>252</sup> A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 213.

The reformists conclude that the *talqīn* after burial has no benefit to the deceased, nor it is recommended by the *sharḥ*, but is merely an innovation. The right *talqīn* as recommended by the Prophet is instructing those who are dying to affirm the words of *tawḥīd*, "*lā ilāha illā Allāh* (there is no god but God)." The Prophet said: "Whisper to those of you who are dying the affirmation of "*lā ilāha illā Allāh*.""<sup>253</sup> This tradition denotes that this *talqīn* can benefit those who are still alive, and is worthless after death. The reformists assert that according to the tradition of the Prophet, after the deceased is buried, it is recommended for the living to pray to God to forgive him and to give him steadfastness when answering the questions from the angels. It is narrated from Hānī', the servant of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān, that when the burial finished, the Prophet stood by the grave and said: "Seek forgiveness for your brother and pray for him to be steadfast, for now he is being questioned."<sup>254</sup> The reformists maintain that even if the *talqīn* after burial is held by the traditionalists as desirable or recommended, it seems as if it is considered as customarily obligatory, as none of them is willing to leave his relatives to be buried without *talqīn*. Such an attitude is harmful as it could cause misjudgement of the *ḥukm* on this matter and lead to misunderstanding that the *talqīn* can secure the deceased in his grave regardless of his lack of faith or good deeds.<sup>255</sup>

## Contributing to the Reward of the Deceased

According to the traditionalists, contributing to the reward of the deceased is recommended in Islam. The basis of their point of view is the tradition narrated by Muslim stated previously: "When a man dies, his actions come to an end, except for three: an ongoing charity (*ṣadaqah jāriyah*); or knowledge by which people benefit;

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<sup>253</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Janā'iz," 1,524. Affirming the words of *tawḥīd* on the approach of death is essential as the Prophet said: "The person whose last words are "*lā ilāha illā Allāh*" will enter Paradise." See for example, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Janā'iz," 2,709.

<sup>254</sup>*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Janā'iz," 2,804.

<sup>255</sup>Dr. Ruhani, *Revolusi Mental*, op.cit., p. 65; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 213.

or a pious son who prays for him (the deceased)." This tradition is regarded by them as an important basis for the principle of contributing rewards for the deceased. According to them, this tradition indicates that only the acts of the deceased, i.e. his obligatory acts (*a'māl taklīfīyah*) have come to an end, while the living can still act and contribute the reward to him. They assert that inasmuch as the deceased in the *barzakh* (interval) world cannot perform obligatory acts, it is necessary for the living to assist him by performing any types of obligatory acts with the intention of contributing the reward to him. From the traditionalists' point of view, it can be concluded from this tradition that beside the statement of the three sources of rewards, this tradition also connotes another source of reward for the deceased, i.e. the contribution of the living.<sup>256</sup> This fact is proven by many other traditions, such as the following:

Ibn 'Abbās narrated that the mother of Sa'd b. 'Ubādah died during Sa'd's absence. He said to the Prophet: "O Messenger of God, my mother died during my absence. Will it benefit her if I give charity on her behalf?" The Prophet said: "Yes." Sa'd said: "I take you as my witness that I give my garden al-Mikhrāf as charity on her behalf."<sup>257</sup>

A man came to the Prophet and said, "O Messenger of God, my mother died and she ought to have fasted one month. Shall I fast on her behalf?" The Prophet replied: "If your mother had been in debt, would you have paid her debt?" The man answered: "Yes." The Prophet said: "God's debt has more right to be paid."<sup>258</sup>

A woman from the tribe of Juhaynah came to the Prophet and said, "My mother had vowed to perform *hajj* but she died before performing it. May I perform *hajj* on my mother's behalf?" The Prophet replied: "Perform *hajj* on her behalf. Had there been a debt on your mother, would you have paid it or not? So, pay God's debt, as it has more right to be paid."<sup>259</sup>

These traditions, according to the traditionalists, clearly signify that the living can contribute to the reward of the deceased by performing any obligatory acts on his behalf, and those acts will benefit him, as well as the living. Contributing to the

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<sup>256</sup> Mohd. Baqir Mohd Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., pp. 46-48.

<sup>257</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Waṣāyā," 2, 551.

<sup>258</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1, 817; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Ṣiyām," 1, 937.

<sup>259</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "1,720; *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, "Kitāb Manāsik al-Ḥajj," 2, 586.



reward of the deceased, as a matter of fact, is not limited to making up obligatory acts on behalf of the deceased only, but encompasses every good action (*‘amal ṣāliḥ*) done by the living. They further state that giving reward to the deceased is like giving one's property earned from work to another. When one performs any act of *‘ibādah*, he gets the reward from God, and thus he owns it and it will be in his possession permanently unless he gives it to someone else. As the reward is of a transcendental (*ghayb*) nature, giving it to another is accomplished through the intention, meaning that one must intend and ask God to give the reward of his performance of *‘ibādah* to the deceased, otherwise, the reward remains his.<sup>260</sup> However, they assert, except in the case of *ḥajj*, reward can only be given to the deceased, and it is not applicable for the living as they are able to get the reward by performing the acts of *‘ibādah* themselves. For the deceased, the only thing the living cannot perform on behalf of them is the prayer, whether the obligatory or the supererogatory ones, as there is no proof that indicate this.<sup>261</sup> However, according to them, missed prayers can be made up by paying a *fidyah* (ransom) to the poor.

In the Malay world, there are many practices included in the category of giving the reward to the deceased. Among them are making up the deceased's missed obligatory actions, such as *zakāh*, fasting and *ḥajj*; paying the *fidyah* for missed prayers; paying his debts; reciting the Qur'ān over his grave and reciting *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*; and performing the *tahlīl* ceremony and the *kenduri arwah*. These will be clarified in the following discussions.

### **Making Up The Deceased's Missed Obligatory Actions**

After one's death, his relatives would investigate if he owes any debts to people, or omitted his obligatory actions. If he owes a debt to people, they pay it out of his property, or, if he has no property, they pay it out of theirs on his behalf. The

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<sup>260</sup>Mohd. Baqir Mohd Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., pp. 94-95.

<sup>261</sup>Ibid, pp. 68-69.

payment of debt should be finished before the burial, but it can be delayed after that if they are not able to pay it straight away. Regarding his missed obligatory actions, i.e. *zakāh*, fasting and *ḥajj*, his relatives will perform them on his behalf. If he has missed obligatory prayers, his relatives make them up by paying *fidyah*, i.e. giving a *cupak* (Arabic *mudd* - a small cubic measure) of rice or its price to the poor for one missed prayer. They also pay the *fidyah* for his missed fasting by the same rate, i.e. a *cupak* for a day of missed fasting.

The practice of paying the *fidyah* for missed prayers is based on a standpoint in the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* as quoted by Ibn Ḥajar in his *al-Tuḥfah*. He says that some scholars of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, such as al-ʿAbbadī, Ishāq, ʿAṭāʾ and Ibn Burhān, hold that *fidyah* of the prayer is permissible, as there is a tradition about that, but this tradition is *maʿlūl* (too weak). He also states that Ibn al-Subkī had once done it for his dead relatives.<sup>262</sup> This standpoint, however, is perceived by the majority of jurists in this *madhhab*, including Ibn Ḥajar, as weak and not recommended.<sup>263</sup> Al-Nawawī states in his *Sharḥ Muslim* that the reason for paying the *fidyah* for a missed prayer is its analogy (*qiyās*) with fasting, which can be made up by the *fidyah*. However he asserts that this standpoint is very weak.<sup>264</sup> Notwithstanding the weakness of this standpoint, it has been adopted by traditional Malay society, especially those who are in rural areas, and regarded as if a must if the deceased has missed prayers in his lifetime.

To pay the *fidyah*, the relative of the dead man would estimate his missed prayers or fasting, and prepare the equivalent amount of rice or its price to be given to the poor or the pious men in the area. If the deceased had never performed the prayer during his lifetime, the total of his missed prayers is estimated from his assumed age of puberty (*bulūgh*) until his death. The cost of this preparation of rice or its price is taken from the dead's property, or, if he left no property or his property

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<sup>262</sup>See Ibn Ḥajar, *Tuḥfat al-Ṭullāb* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, n.d.), vol. 3, pp. 231-232. See also, Saiyid Alwi Haddad, *Fatwa Muftī Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 55-65.

<sup>263</sup>Ibn Ḥajar, *Tuḥfat al-Ṭullāb*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 231. See also, Saiyid Alwi Haddad, *Fatwa Muftī Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 56, 60, 64.

<sup>264</sup>Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 49.

is not enough for this purpose, his relative would defray it. In normal practice, the rice or its price need not amount to very much, as it can be used repeatedly to complete the *fidyah*. For example, three gunny sacks of rice is normally used to pay the *fidyah* for a year (for 1,825 times) of missed prayers, but they can be used numerous times until the *fidyah* is completed, which means that if the deceased omitted the prayers for ten years, they will be used ten times. This requires them to be returned to the *fidyah* payer, i.e the relative of the dead man, after it was handed to the payee, i.e the poor or the pious man. The payer would negotiate first with the payee to return the rice back to him as a *ṣadaqah* or *hadiyah* (gift), so that he can use it numerous times to complete the *fidyah*. To begin the payment of *fidyah*, the relative of the deceased utters that he pays the certain amount of the rice as *fidyah* of the certain numbers of missed prayers on behalf of the deceased, stating his name, and hands it to the payee. The rice then belongs to the payee, but he then returns it back to the payer saying that he gives the rice to him as a *ṣadaqah* or *hadiyah*. Using the same rice, the payer and the payee then would repeat the same step, until the amount of the *fidyah* completes. After it finishes, the rice would either be returned to the payer or kept by the payee, depending on their agreement. If the price of the rice is used, normally in money or gold jewellery, the same procedure is used, but they would be finally returned to the payer, and only a small amount of money is given to the payee as a wage of his cooperation in completing the payment of *fidyah*.

Such a practice, which seems to contain an element of trickery, is not only denounced by the reformists, but is also denounced by some traditionalist scholars. For them, even if the payment of *fidyah* is permissible, such a practice is considered a kind of deception in matters of religion that will not benefit the deceased. Such a practice is also considered as an attempt to deceive God, as stated in the Qur'ān: "They deceive God and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves, and they perceive it not" (2: 9). They maintain that the *fidyah* should be paid with the right amount to the poor, and it cannot be returned back to the payer, and the agreement about that is perceived as not valid as it denies the freedom of the payee

to use his property. Such a practice is considered a *bid'ah* and an invalid trick.<sup>265</sup> However, among traditional Malay society in certain parts of the Malay Peninsula, this method of paying the *fidyah* is still widely practised as it is regarded as the only way to make up the deceased's missed prayers.

Another practice of contributing to the reward of the deceased is reciting the Qur'ān over his grave. According to the traditionalists, it is recommended for the family to recite the Qur'ān, especially *Sūrat Yā Sīn* for the deceased, and if they are not able to recite it, they can hire a pious man to recite it. The recitation of the Qur'ān is recommended to be done by the grave of the deceased, but it also can be done in the house of the deceased. It is narrated that the Prophet said: "Whoever enters the grave area and recites *qul huwa Allāh aḥad* eleven times, and then he present it as gift to the deceased, will be given the reward of as many as the number of the deceased."<sup>266</sup> Al-Shāfi'ī is reported to have said: "It is desired (*yustaḥabb*) that a part of the Qur'ān is recited by the grave (after the funeral), and if the whole Qur'ān is recited, that is good."<sup>267</sup> In certain parts of Malaysia, a gathering to recite the whole Qur'ān attended by the whole community is held until the third day (sometimes until the seventh day) after the death. Everyone recites certain chapters of the Qur'ān with the intention that the reward of the recitation is given to the deceased. The gathering is ended with a prayer for the deceased.<sup>268</sup>

The recitation of the Qur'ān for the deceased can also be done at anytime after that specific time, but reciting it on Friday it is most recommended. This is based on the Prophetic traditions: "Whoever visits his parent's grave or the grave of one of them on Friday, reciting *Sūrat Yā Sīn*, will be forgiven"; "Whoever visits the grave of his parent every Friday and recites *Sūrat Yā Sīn* by the grave, will be forgiven

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<sup>265</sup>Saiyid Alwi al-Haddad, *Fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 62-63.

<sup>266</sup>Narrated by al-Dāraquṭnī, as quoted in Mohd. Baqir, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., p. 51.

<sup>267</sup>Al-Nawawī, *Riyāḍ al-Ṣāliḥīn* (Dimashq: Dār al-Ma'mūn li al-Turāth, 1980), p. 152.

<sup>268</sup>Amran Kasimin, *The Religion and Social Change*, op.cit., p. 200.

as much as the number of its verses or its letters.”<sup>269</sup> In certain parts of the northern Malay Peninsula, it is customary for the families of the dead to hire the pious men to recite the Qur’ān by the grave during the month of Ramaḍān as to celebrate the blessing of this month. According to the traditionalists, hiring a person to recite the Qur’ān for the deceased is of benefit to all parties: the hirer, the hired person and the deceased. Even if the hired person recites the Qur’ān with the sole intention of getting the wage, the deceased will benefit by the recitation.<sup>270</sup>

Included in the category of contributing to the reward of the deceased is the *sedekah fatihah*, i.e. reciting *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* and giving its reward to the deceased. This is a very common practice in traditional Malay society and regarded as the simplest way of contributing to the reward of the deceased, as there is no specific ceremony needed for this purpose. One can contribute to the reward of the deceased at anytime and anywhere by reciting *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* with the intention of giving its reward to the deceased. In addition to *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, they also recite *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* as it is believed to comprise one third of the Qur’ān. It is also customary to do *sedekah fatihah* en masse but inaudibly at the beginning of any gathering they hold, instead of holding the *tahlīl* ceremony.

The issue of contributing to the reward of the deceased is one of the disputed matters among the jurists. The jurists agree that *du‘ā’*, *istighfār*, *ṣadaqah* and making up missed acts of *‘ibādah* (except prayer) can benefit the deceased, as this is indicated by many Prophetic traditions. However they dispute regarding whether other physical forms of *‘ibādah* (*‘ibādah badaniyah*), such as the prayer, recitation of Qur’ān and *dhikr*, can benefit the deceased or not. The jurists of the Ḥanafī *madhhab* and some jurists of the Mālikī, Shāfi‘ī and Ḥanbalī *madhhabs* hold that it benefits the deceased, while the majority of jurists of the Mālikī, the Shāfi‘ī and the Ḥanbalī

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<sup>269</sup>As quoted in Dr. Ruhani, *Revolusi Mental*, op.cit., p. 69. The narrators of both traditions are not mentioned.

<sup>270</sup>Daud Fatani, *Furū al-Masā’il*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 183-184.



*madhhabs* hold that it does not benefit the deceased.<sup>271</sup> In this issue, it seems that the traditionalists, who are of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, adopt the viewpoint of the minority of the jurists in the *madhhab*, while the reformists adopt the standpoint of the majority of the jurists of the Mālikī, Shāfiʿī and Ḥanbalī *madhhabs*.

Defending their standpoint, the reformists assert that contributing to the reward of the deceased by performing prayer, reciting the Qurʾān or *dhikr* would not benefit the deceased as there is no proof that indicates this and it contradicts statements in the Qurʾān, such as: "And that man can have nothing but what he did" (53: 39); "This Day (the Day of Resurrection), none will be wronged in anything, nor will you be requited anything except that which you have done" (36: 54); "He (a person) gets reward for that (good) which he has earned, and he is punished for that (evil) which he has earned" (2: 286); "Whoever does a righteous good deed, that is for (the benefit of) his own self, and whoever does evil, that is against his own self, and your Lord is not at all unjust to (His) servants" (41: 46); "Whoever acts correctly, goes right only for the benefit of his own self. And whoever goes astray, goes astray to his own loss. No one laden with burdens can bear another's burden. And We never punish until We have sent a Messenger (to give warning)" (17: 15); and "This Day you shall be recompensed for what you have done" (45: 28). Generally, the reformists maintain, these verses indicate that one can get reward only from one's own effort, and none can contribute any reward to another, and this law applies to both the living and the dead. However, the generality of these verses is specified by Prophetic traditions indicating that *duʿāʾ*, *istighfār*, *ṣadaqah*, and making up missed obligatory acts of *ʿibādah* (except prayer), when performed by the living for the deceased, are of the benefit to the deceased. The other kinds of *ʿibādah* which are not so indicated are subject to the generality of the law, unless it is proven otherwise. Even if it is known that one's reward is one's "private property" which one can keep or give to another by intention or praying to God, in this case, his intention or prayer would not be

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<sup>271</sup>See for example, Wahbah al-Zuhayli, *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 550-551.



accepted as they contradict the law of God.<sup>272</sup>

Regarding the traditionalists' practice of paying *fidyah* for the deceased's missed prayers, the reformists state that this is a baseless practice which is unacknowledged by almost all jurists, including the great jurists of the Shāfi'i *madhhab*, and of course, by al-Shāfi'i himself. They state that the *fidyah* is only specified for missed fasting, and not for the prayer. Using analogy to equate the prayer with fasting is unacceptable as they claim that analogy is not valid in matters of *ʿibādah*. On the method of paying the *fidyah* established by the traditionalists, the reformists consider it as a ridiculous deception in religion and a kind of *bid'ah munkarah* that should be eliminated at all costs. Furthermore, they assert that the *fidyah* for missed prayer and paying it in such a way can be considered as a *bid'ah murakkabah* (multiple innovation), as both of them are unknown in the religion. Such a practice is useless and is making a mockery of the religion.

The reformists have the same perception regarding reciting the Qur'ān for the deceased, either by the grave or at home. They maintain that all the traditions pertaining to the issue of reciting the Qur'ān for the deceased by his grave are either too weak or fabricated, as stated by several traditionists who have investigated these traditions.<sup>273</sup> Regarding the saying of al-Shāfi'i that it is desirable to recite the Qur'ān by the grave after the burial, the reformists hold, quoting Sayyid Sābiq's, that the recitation desired by al-Shāfi'i is for the purpose of blessing for the deceased, not for the purpose of giving the reward to him, as it is known that al-Shāfi'i did not acknowledge that the reward of the recitation of the Qur'ān would benefit the deceased.<sup>274</sup> They also quote al-Nawawī's statement that the dominant standpoint (*al-mashhūr*) in the Shāfi'i *madhhab* regarding reciting the Qur'ān for the deceased is that the reward of the recitation does not benefit the deceased. He cites in his *Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* and *al-Majmūʿ* that al-Shāfi'i's proof of this matter is the verse of the Qur'ān:

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<sup>272</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 68-69; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 992-995; Drs. Ubaidillah, *Majlis Tahlil*, op.cit., pp. 10-11.

<sup>273</sup>Dr. Ruhani, *Revolusi Mental*, op.cit., pp. 69-70.

<sup>274</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

"And that man can have nothing but what he did" (53: 39); and the saying of the Prophet mentioned previously: "When a man dies, his actions come to an end...."<sup>275</sup> The reformists also denounce the practice of hiring a pious man to recite the Qur'ān for the deceased, asserting that reciting the Qur'ān with a worldly intention is prohibited, as stated by almost all jurists. They quote the words of Maḥmūd al-ʿAyn, the commentator of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in his *ʿUmdat al-Qārī*: "It is prohibited to recite the Qur'ān for a worldly purpose. Both the receiver (of the wage) and the giver are committing a sin." Ibn Ṣadr al-Sharīʿah in his *al-Nihāyah Sharḥ al-Hidāyah* is quoted as saying: "The recitation of the Qur'ān with the intention of getting a wage (*ujrah*) is of benefit to neither the deceased nor the reciter."<sup>276</sup>

On the practice of *sedekah fatihah* for the deceased, the reformists hold a similar perception, considering this practice as another example of *bidʿah* in Malay society. They maintain that there are in fact various ways for the living to assist the deceased as indicated in Prophetic traditions, instead of "creating" their own way for that purpose. According to the *sunnah* of the Prophet, the living are recommended to pray to God for the blessing of the deceased and to ask forgiveness for him. To contribute to the reward of the deceased, apart from making up his missed obligations, the Prophet recommended the living to give charity on behalf of the deceased and this will surely benefit him. Giving examples of matters that benefit the deceased, the reformists convey al-Suyūṭī's and Aḥmad al-Ḥakamī's words expressed in their poems.<sup>277</sup> Al-Suyūṭī says:

"When the son of Adam dies then finished  
 from him are his actions except ten:  
 Knowledge he had spread and the prayer of his offspring  
 and his planted dates and his ongoing charity  
 And heritage of a muṣḥaf and a lodge for travellers at a seaport  
 and digging a well or making a river flow  
 And a house he built for foreigners to take shelter [in]

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<sup>275</sup>Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Muslim*, vol. 1, p. 49; idem, *al-Majmūʿ*, vol. 10, p. 426.

<sup>276</sup>As cited in Dr. Ruhani, *Revolusi Mental*, op.cit., p. 42.

<sup>277</sup>Abdullah al-Qari, *Aneka 'Amalan Manfaat Selepas Mati* (Kelantan: Pustaka ASA, 1993), pp. 60-61.

or a place he built for *dhikr*  
And teaching the noble *Qur'ān*.  
Take this from traditions briefly."

While al-Ḥakamī says:

"And it is true that charity and prayer  
benefit, if done as prescribed  
Likewise paying a debt, regardless of  
who is the payer, without disputation  
Likewise for the father the effort of his son  
will benefit him, by the text, without hesitation  
And fasting and pilgrimage which are made up  
by a relative or other after him, and that is clear."

### The *Tahlīl* Ceremony and *Kenduri Arwah* (Feast of the Deceased)

The *tahlīl*<sup>278</sup> ceremony and *kenduri arwah* are very common practices in the Malay world and regarded by the Malays as their most important custom. *Tahlīl* and *kenduri arwah* are customarily held on certain days after a person's death, i.e. on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 40<sup>th</sup> (or 44<sup>th</sup>) and 100<sup>th</sup> days. After the 100<sup>th</sup> day they are held on unspecified days, and are usually held jointly with other occasions such as wedding feasts, feasts of circumcision and feasts of thankfulness. Some people, apart from that, hold the same feast once every year. The main purpose of this practice, in addition to remembering the deceased, is to give him the reward of the recitation of the *tahlīl*, the reward of *ṣadaqah* (as giving a feast is considered a type of *ṣadaqah*), and to pray for the blessing of God in the hereafter.<sup>279</sup> This practice, however, is not prescribed in the

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<sup>278</sup>Literarily, *tahlīl* means saying the words "*lā ilāha illa-Allāh* (there is no god but God). In the Malay world, *tahlīl* (Malay *tahlil*, or *meratib*) refers to a ceremony of chanting these words, which the rewards of this chanting are specially dedicated for the deceased. The reason for choosing these words to be recited for the deceased is because these words are regarded as the best *dhikr*, as the Prophet said: "The best *dhikr* is *lā ilāha illa-Allāh*, and the best *du'a'* is *al-ḥamdu li-Allāh*." (Narrated by al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Mājah). See Mohd. Baqir Mohd. Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., pp. 113-116.

<sup>279</sup>See A. Aziz Deraman & Wan Ramli Wan Mohamad, *Adat dan Pantang Larang Orang Melayu* (Kuala Lumpur: Fajar Bakti, 1995), p. 58; Amran Kasimin, *Religion and Social Change*, op.cit., pp. 199-200; Alwi (continued...)

Malay traditional *fiqh* books, but is well accepted by traditional Malay society and is regarded as an important part of their religious activities.

The *kenduri arwah* is organized by the deceased's close relatives and is normally held at night after the 'Ishā' prayer. All relatives of the dead, his neighbours, the *imām* and pious men, especially the staff of the nearest mosque, are invited to the feast. It is considered that the more pious men invited, the better it is for the deceased. The *kenduri arwah* is started by the *tahlīl* ceremony, which is led by the *imām*, who in this particular ceremony is called *khalifah* (caliph). Before commencing the *tahlīl* ceremony<sup>280</sup> with the recitation of the *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, the *khalifah* mentions who its reward will be presented to. He says: "To the presence of the Prophet, to his family, all the Prophets and Messengers, the Prophet's Companions, the Followers, the Followers of the Followers, and to all spirits of their parents, all Muslims and Mu'mins whether they are living or dead. For them is (the reward of) *al-Fātiḥah*." The word "*al-Fātiḥah*" is said loudly signalling that everyone must recite *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. After reciting it, they chant *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* three times, *Sūrat al-Falaq* and *Sūrat al-Nās* once. Afterwards, *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah* is recited again, followed by the chanting of certain verses of *Sūrat al-Baqarah*, namely, verses 1 to 5, 255, and 284 to 286. This is followed by blessing and praising the Prophet and his family. The *istighfār* is then chanted three times. The chanting is paused, and then the *khalifah* utters, quoting the saying of the Prophet: "The best *dhikr* - let it be known - is *lā ilāha illa-Allāh*," and the people answer "*Ḥayy Ma'bud* (The Living, The Worshipped). He then says again the *tahlīl*, while the people answer "*Ḥayy Mawjud* (The Living, The Existing)." The third time he chants the *tahlīl*, the people answer, "*Muḥammad rasūl Allāh* (Muḥammad is the Messenger of God)."

They then chant the *tahlīl* together, loudly and repeatedly for at least a hundred times, slowly at first, but then picking up speed, shaking their heads and

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<sup>279</sup>(...continued)

b. Sheikh Alhady, *Malay Customs and Traditions* (Singapore: Eastern Universities Press, 1962), p. 58.

<sup>280</sup>See full text of *tahlīl* in, for example, 'Ali Baldram, *Perukunan*, op.cit., pp. 155-159; YADIM, *Yā Sām, Tahlīl dan Doa* (booklet), pp. 20-44.

bodies left and right with their eyes closed in concentration. To signal the end of the chanting of *tahlīl*, the *khalifah* raises his voice over the others' and reduces the speed of the chant. Continuing the ceremony, the blessing on the Prophet is recited after that, followed by these formulas: chanting of the *tasbīḥ* (saying *subḥān Allāh wa bi-ḥamdih* - Glory be to God and praise be to Him) 33 times; chanting *yā Allāh* (O God) 33 times; and the *istighfār* 10 times. The blessing on the Prophet is then recited again, followed by the recitation of *Sūrat al-Fātiḥah*. The *khalifah* then recites the prayer for the deceased (*doa arwah*), while the people say "Amen" at his pauses. The major content of this prayer <sup>281</sup> is praying to God to send the reward of all that they have recited as a gift (*hadiyah*) to the presence of the Prophet Muḥammad, to his family, his Companions, the Followers, and the Followers of the Followers. Then they pray to God to send the reward specifically to the spirit of the deceased by mentioning his name and his father's name, and to his ancestors and descendants in general. They also pray to God to send the rewards to the spirits of their parents and ancestors, and to the spirits of all the dead Muslims and Mu'mins. The prayer finally ends when the *khalifah* utters "*taqabbal Allāh min-kum* (may God accept from you all)," and the people answer "*min-nā wa min-kum, taqabbal yā Karīm* (from us and from all of you, please accept, O Most Generous)." According to them, the reward of this practice, which is intended for the deceased, would not be only received by him, but those who perform it would also receive the same reward.<sup>282</sup> After the ceremony finishes, the guests are served with food and drink. The usual food served, which is a must, is yellow glutinous rice, a symbol of remembering the deceased, which is also considered as a trade mark of the *kenduri arwah*. The deceased's relatives who pay the expenses of preparing the foods intend it as a charity whose reward is also dedicated to the deceased.

In the viewpoint of the traditionalists, this practice is considered good and recommended. They hold that this practice is included in the category of contributing

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<sup>281</sup>See the full text of the prayer of the deceased in Ali Baldram, *Perukunan*, op.cit., pp. 158-159; YADIM, *Yā Sīn, Tahlīl dan Doa* (booklet), pp. 33-40.

<sup>282</sup>Dāud Fatani, *Furū' al-Masā'il*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 183-184; Mohd. Baqir, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., pp. 51, 110.



to the reward of the deceased, which they perceive as recommended and demanded in Islam.<sup>283</sup> Regarding the *tahlīl* ceremony, the traditionalists perceive it as good and recommended. They hold that the *tahlīl* ceremony is in fact a combination of the recitation of the Qur'ān and various *dhikrs* and supplications for the dead, and these acts are well known as recommended, and thus there is no doubt that this ceremony is also recommended. The *tahlīl* ceremony is considered as a type of *dhikr* (remembrance) that is not only endorsed, but commanded by the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. For example, the Qur'ān says: "O you who believe, remember God with much remembrance" (33:41); "And remember your Lord much" (2: 41); "And men who remember God much and women who remember (Him), God has prepared for them forgiveness and a vast reward" (33: 35). Referring to the *sunnah*, the Prophet is reported to have said: "The best *dhikr* is *lā ilāha illa-Allāh*."<sup>284</sup> He also said: "The luckiest person who will have my intercession on the Day of Resurrection will be the one who has said *lā ilāha illa-Allāh* sincerely from the bottom of his heart."<sup>285</sup> The Prophet said in another tradition: "The angels will surround those who are sitting together remembering God, mercy will cover them, tranquility will descend upon them, and God will mention them in the presence of those near Him."<sup>286</sup>

The traditionalists assert that practising the *tahlīl* ceremony for the benefit of the deceased is also good as it is a way to assist their Muslim brothers, which is also encouraged in Islam. In their viewpoint, even if the reward of the practice is intended to be presented specially for the deceased, it, in fact, is not only received by the deceased, but the participants of the ceremony will also receive the same reward.<sup>287</sup>

The traditionalists claim that the feast of the deceased was in fact a custom

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<sup>283</sup>Mohd. Baqir Mohd Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., pp. 45-46.

<sup>284</sup>*Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Da'awāt," 3,305; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, "Kitāb al-Adab," 3,790.

<sup>285</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb al-ʿIlm," 97; *al-Musnad*, "Bāqī Musnad al-Mukthirīn," 8,503.

<sup>286</sup>See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Dhikr wa al-Du'ā' wa al-Tawbah wa al-Istighfār," 4,868

<sup>287</sup>See Daud Fatani, *Furūʿ al-Masā'il*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 183-184.



in pre Islamic Arabia, and it was permitted by the Prophet after the advent of Islam.<sup>288</sup> They maintain that the Prophet himself once attended the feast held by the widow of a deceased man after his burial. It is narrated from ʿĀṣim b. Kulayb that a man of the Anṣār said:

"We went out with the Messenger of God to a funeral, and I saw the Messenger of God at the grave giving instructions to the grave digger: "Make it wide on the side of his feet, and make it wide on the side of his head." When he came back, he was met by a man who conveyed an invitation from a woman, i.e. the widow of the deceased. So he fulfilled the invitation and we all came with him. The food was brought, and he put his hand on it and the people did the same and they ate. When the Messenger of God was chewing a morsel in his mouth, he said: "I find the flesh of a sheep which has been taken without its owner's permission." The woman said: "O Messenger of God, I sent (someone) to al-Baqīʿ to have a sheep bought for me, but there was none. So I sent (him) to my neighbour, who had bought a sheep, asking him to send it to me for the price (he had paid), but he could not be found. I, therefore, sent (him) to his wife and she sent it to me." The Messenger of God said: "Give this food to the prisoners."<sup>289</sup>

The traditionalists assert that it is clear from this tradition that the feast of the deceased held by his family is permissible, as the Prophet and his Companions once attended one, showing that he agreed with such a practice.

As the feast of the deceased is neither recommended nor prohibited by the Prophet, it is subject to the intention behind the practice; if it is held with the intention of giving charity to the people, the *ḥukm* of the feast becomes recommended, as charity is encouraged in Islam. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAmr narrated that the Prophet was asked: "What kind of deeds in Islam are best?" He replied: "Feeding the poor, and greeting those you know and those you don't know."<sup>290</sup> Furthermore, the traditionalists maintain that charity may be given on behalf of the deceased as the Prophet affirmed it when he was asked about it. ʿĀ'ishah narrated that a man said to the Prophet: "My mother died suddenly and she wasn't able to bequeath. I think if she could have spoken, she would have given charity. May I give charity on her behalf?" He

<sup>288</sup>Mohd. Baqir Mohd Ali, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., pp. 103-104.

<sup>289</sup>Narrated by al-Bayhaqī as quoted in *ibid.*, pp. 102-103.

<sup>290</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Īmān," 11; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Īmān," 56.

said: "Yes! Give charity on her behalf."<sup>291</sup> According to the Malay custom, the *kenduri arwah* is held with an intention of giving charity, whose reward is dedicated for the deceased, and this, the traditionalists maintain, is concordant with Islamic teachings. Regarding the specification of the days for the feast, they assert that this is only the Malay custom which can be followed or ignored, as there is no indication from any *naṣṣ* (text) about this, and one is allowed to hold it whenever one wishes.<sup>292</sup> However, there is another viewpoint from some traditionalists who say that such a feast is reprehensible,<sup>293</sup> but this opinion seems unpopular and disregarded by traditional Malay society.

For the reformists, the practice of *tahlīl* and *kenduri arwah* is considered as *bid'ah* and not part of Islamic teachings. They maintain that this practice is a new form of *'ibādah* created by the Malays a long time ago, and thereafter has been a deeply rooted custom among them. It is regarded as their essential religious activity alongside the five pillars of Islam, and it has also been a source of religious satisfaction and pride for them. However, the reformists say, such a practice is unknown in Islam, as it was never practised by the Prophet, his Companions, the Pious Forefathers and the leaders of the *madhāhib*, nor it was prescribed by them. Such a practice has no basis in the religion and is only a Malay tradition inherited from their ancestors.<sup>294</sup>

Regarding the *tahlīl* ceremony, the reformists affirm that the *tahlīl*, reciting the Qur'ān and invocation for the deceased, are originally recommended, but compiling them to be recited in specific way and creating a ceremony for practising it on the occasion of death is a blameworthy *bid'ah*. Such a specification is an act of

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<sup>291</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb al-Zakāh," 1,672. Also narrated by al-Bukhārī with slightly different text. See Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Janā'iz," 1,299.

<sup>292</sup>Mohd. Baqir, *Apakah Tawassul Itu Syirik?*, op.cit., p. 108. However, it is believed that the specification of the days of the feast is based on a traditional Malay belief that the spirit of the deceased returns to his home on these days. The feast is held to welcome and celebrate his return, in addition to contribute the reward of the feast to him.

<sup>293</sup>See Daud Fatani, *Furū' al-Masā'il*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 182-183.

<sup>294</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelombang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 188-189; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 216.

creating a new form of *‘ibādah*, while man has no right to do that. Practising it and presenting its reward to the deceased is a *bid‘ah* rejected by God. The Prophet said: "Whoever performs action which is not on our command, it is rejected."<sup>295</sup> The reformists maintain that the origin of the *tahlīl* ceremony is believed to be established by an excessive *‘ābid* (worshipper) who saw in his dream a group of people being tormented in the *barzakh* world coming to him asking him to help them by saying the *tahlīl* thousands of times and presenting the reward to them. After doing what was asked, he saw in his dream that those people were in enjoyment, telling him that they have been released from their tortures as a result of the reward of the *tahlīl* presented to them. It was from this dream that the *tahlīl* ceremony originated. However, the reformists affirm, the *shar‘ah* is based on what is the *naṣṣ*, not on dreams. Dreams have no credibility nor legality at all in religious matters. Therefore, practising what is based on dreams is useless and rejected.<sup>296</sup>

Furthermore, they maintain that the *tahlīl* ceremony as practised by the traditionalists nowadays is not approved by the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* as has been said by the jurists of the *madhhab*. Al-Nawawī, for example, says: "Regarding the recitation of the Qur’ān, the popular standpoint in the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab* is that the reward of the recitation will not benefit the deceased. The proofs of al-Shāfi‘ī and those who are in favour with him on this is the saying of God: "And that man can have nothing but what he did" (Q, 53: 39); and the saying of the Prophet: "When a man dies, his actions come to an end, except for three: an ongoing charity (*ṣadaqah jāriyah*); or knowledge by which people benefit; or a pious son who prays for him (the deceased)."<sup>297</sup> Al-Muzanī in his *Hāmish al-Umm*, al-Haythamī in his *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, and al-Subkī in his *Takmilat al-Majmū‘* say the same. As the reward of recitation of the Qur’ān will not be obtained by the deceased, neither will the recitation of *dhikr*, including the *tahlīl*, benefit him. At this point, the reformists denounce the traditionalists' manner who proudly claim themselves as loyal exponents of the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab*, but ignore

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<sup>295</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Aqḍiyah," 3, 243; *al-Musnad*, "Bāqī Musnad al-Anṣār," 23, 975.

<sup>296</sup> Dr. Ruhani, *Revolusi Mental*, op.cit., p. 66-67.

<sup>297</sup> Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ Muslim*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 49.

what is said by their masters on this issue.<sup>298</sup>

Concerning the *kenduri arwah*, which is held on specific days after death, the reformists also consider it as a *bid'ah*, as it has no basis in any *naṣṣ*. Holding the feast is originally good, but specifying it on the day of the death and certain days after that is purely *bid'ah* as it was never prescribed in the Qur'ān or the *sunnah* of the Prophet. The *kenduri arwah*, they claim, was created by the Malays and only known in this form in their world.<sup>299</sup> This practice was in fact prohibited by the Companions of the Prophet as they regarded it as a type of wailing of the deceased (*niyāḥah*) which was prohibited by the Prophet.<sup>300</sup> It is narrated that Jarīr b. 'Abd Allāh al-Bajalī, a Companion of the Prophet said: "We consider that assembling together with the family of the deceased with a feast after the funeral is a type of wailing."<sup>301</sup> Furthermore, they assert, the *kenduri arwah* that is held by the family of the deceased also contradicts the saying of the Prophet who instructed his Companions to prepare food for the family of the dead, and not vice versa. The Prophet said to his Companions on the death of Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib: "Prepare some food for the family of Ja'far as they are suffering what has bothered them."<sup>302</sup>

Regarding the tradition of 'Āṣim who narrated that the Prophet attended the feast held by a woman after the funeral of her husband, the reformists argue this tradition saying that the woman who invited the Prophet and his Companions to the feast had no relationship to the deceased. This is suggested by the narration of Abū Dāwūd, al-Shawkānī and al-Ṣan'ānī, according to which the phrase of "*dā'ī imra'atihī* (the inviter of the deceased's wife)" as appears in the narration of al-Bayhaqī, appear in their narration as "*dā'ī imra'atin* (the inviter of a woman). This means that the

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<sup>298</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 191-193; Drs. Ubaidillah, *Majlis Tahlil Dan Kenduri Arwah Menurut Mazhab Syafie* (Kedah: Ahlus Sunnah Wal Jama'ah Kedah D. A, n.d.), pp. 2-6.

<sup>299</sup>However, similar feasts are also known elsewhere, such as in Iran, Pakistan and Algeria. The reformists may not aware of it.

<sup>300</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 167-168; A. Hassan. *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 215-217, 970-974.

<sup>301</sup>*Sunan Ibn Mājah*, "Kitāb al-Janā'iz," 2,309; *al-Musnad*, "Bāqī al-Mukthirīn," 21,032.

<sup>302</sup>*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, "Kitāb al-Janā'iz," 2,698; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-Janā'iz," 3,324.

Prophet was invited to the feast by another woman, not the deceased's widow. It is known that the narration of Abū Dāwūd is of a higher degree than that of al-Bayhaqī's, and thus, the narration of Abū Dāwūd is more acceptable.<sup>303</sup>

To strengthen their standpoint, the reformists also convey the opinions of the jurists of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* regarding this practice. They assert that according to the jurists of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, the feast of the deceased is reprehensible and even prohibited.<sup>304</sup> Al-Nawawī says in his *al-Majmūʿ*: "Regarding preparing foods by the family (of the dead) and the assembly of people for it, there is no account (in a *naṣṣ*) about that, and it is considered as an undesirable innovation (*bidʿah ghayr mustaḥabbah*)." Ibn Sayyid al-Dimyātī in his *f ānat al-Ṭālibīn* says, "What is practised by the people, i.e. assembling together with the relatives of the deceased with feast, is a blemeworthy innovation (*bidʿah munkarah*), and who prohibit it will be rewarded."<sup>305</sup> Ibn Ḥajar in his *al-Tuḥfah*, al-Sharbīnī al-Khaṭīb in his *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj* and al-Qalyūbī in his *Ḥāshiyat al-Qalyūbī* say the same.<sup>306</sup> Al-Shāfi'ī himself says in his *al-Umm*: "I hate *al-ma'tam*, i.e. assembling (in the dead's house), even if there is no crying, because it causes sadness."<sup>307</sup> The reformists conclude that the traditionalists' practice on this matter is not based on knowledge, but is only a tradition inherited from their ancestors, which hides behind the face of the religion.<sup>308</sup>

Concluding their argument, the reformists maintain that most of the traditional practices of contributing to the reward of the deceased are not based on strong facts and arguments, but seem to be merely an imitation of customs inherited from their ancestors. This is proven when they keep doing the practices which clearly contradict

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<sup>303</sup>A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 970-975.

<sup>304</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 191-192; Drs. Ubaidillah, *Majlis Tahlil*, op.cit., pp. 11-20.

<sup>305</sup>Abū Bakr b. Sayyid al-Dimyātī, *f ānat al-Ṭālibīn* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1938), vol. 2, p. 145.

<sup>306</sup>Ibid., pp. 145-146; al-Sharbīnī al-Khaṭīb, *Mughnī al-Muḥtāj*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 268; Aḥmad b. Salāmah al-Qalyūbī, *Ḥāshiyat al-Qalyūbī* (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-ʿArabiyyah, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 353.

<sup>307</sup>Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 248.

<sup>308</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 192-193; Drs. Ubaidillah, *Majlis Tahlil*, op.cit., pp. 23-25.

the definite standpoint in the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* regarding this issue. It is absurd, the reformists maintain, that the traditionalists claim themselves as loyal adherents of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, but at the same time ignore the standpoints that contradict their own interests, as if they are the opponents of their own *madhhab*.<sup>309</sup>

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<sup>309</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 191-193; Drs. Ubaidullah, *Majlis Tahlil*, p. 2.



## CHAPTER 5

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### THE CONFLICT OVER <sup>ʿ</sup>IBĀDAH: AN ANALYSIS

#### Reasons For Conflict

The examples of conceptual and practical differences between the traditionalists and the reformists pertaining to the matter of <sup>ʿ</sup>ibādah propounded throughout Chapter Four show that the conflict between the two parties revolves mainly around the matters about which there is dispute (*masā'il khilāfiyyah*) and matters relating to the branches (*furū'*) of the religion. As with juristic differences (*ikhtilāf fiqhī*), they never involve the basic principles of the tenets of Islam, but they have resulted in differences and conflict within the *ummah*. Juristic differences are considered a natural phenomenon in the *ummah* and have never been a problem among the jurists, but can have a bad impact if they are not wisely understood and dealt with by the *ummah*.<sup>1</sup> History shows that, even if the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in Malaysia does not relate to the basic principles of the tenets of Islam, it has engendered a bitter experience which is hard to forget. Islamic reformism in Malaysia has never called for reform of the religion itself, but rather for reform of the traditional thought of Malay Muslims, which is blamed for being a source of stagnation of the Malay *ummah*, and this has brought implicit challenges to Islamic traditionalism to defend the status quo. The clash between the two views has stirred up Malay Muslims and resulted in condemnation, criticism, denunciation, vituperation and each boycotting the other. Although these phenomena seem to have somewhat abated in the present, the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists remains

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<sup>1</sup>Alī al-Khafīf, *Asbāb Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā'* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Ḥalabī, 1956), p. 12; ʿAbd Allāh ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī, *Asbāb Ikhtilāf al-Fuqahā'* (Riyāḍ: Dār al-Qalam, 1977), p. 23; Ṭāhā Jābir al-ʿAlwānī, *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam* (New York: IIT, 1989), passim; Amin Ahsan Islahī, *Juristic Differences and How to Resolve Them in an Islamic State* (Lahore: Islamic Publication Ltd, 1989), pp. xiv, xviii.

unresolved. In the realm of *‘ibādah*, this conflict is especially obvious as it concerns matters of fundamental practice. On the one hand the conflict seems to resemble that of the typical juristic differences, but on the other, it is identified as a result of disputation about some essential matters related to the principles of Islamic reform. These can be analysed under the following headings.

## Different Perceptions Regarding the Concept of *Bid‘ah*<sup>2</sup>

As seen in the Chapter Four, there are many disputed practices, such as reciting certain prayers before the *adhān*, uttering the intention of prayer, reciting the *dhikr* en masse and loudly after the prayer, chanting certain *dhikrs* during the prayer of *tarāwīḥ* etc, which relate to the issue of *bid‘ah*. It is known that among the main doctrinal principles of Islamic reform is calling the *ummah* to return to the pristine Islam, i.e. to return to the Qur’ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet and to refrain from *bid‘ah*. Thus, as regards the matter of *‘ibādah*, the reformists strongly emphasize that all ritual forms of *‘ibādah* must be rightly performed in accordance with the Qur’ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet, and any additions or reductions are regarded as *bid‘ahs* which must be eliminated.<sup>3</sup> The term *bid‘ah* is defined, by referring to al-

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<sup>2</sup>*Bid‘ah* is derived from the root word "*bad‘a*" which means to innovate, to invent, to create or to originate something new. See E. Lane, *Arabic - English Lexicon*, (London & Edinburgh, Williams & Norgate, 1874), vol. 1, pp. 166-167). *Bid‘* is a noun meaning something firstly innovated, as appears in the Qur’ān: 46: 9: "Say: I am not a new thing (*bid‘*) among the Messengers (i.e. I am not the first Messenger)..." *Bad‘* is a person who originates or creates something, usually used to refer to God who is the Creator, as mentioned in Q: 2: 117: "(God is) the Creator (*bad‘*) of the heavens and the earth..." *Ibtad‘a* means to create *bid‘ah*, as appears in Q: 57: 27: "... But the Monasticism which they invented (*ibtad‘ū-hā*) for themselves, We did not prescribe for them, but (they sought it) only to please God therewith." *Mubtad‘* is a person who commits *bid‘ah*. *Bid‘ah*, which is a noun of *ibtidā‘*, literally means innovation and is lexically defined as "a newly innovated thing which was unknown before," or "A new thing created in the religion after it has been completed." See Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, n.d.), vol 8, pp. 6-8; Sa‘dī Abū Jayb, *al-Qāmūs al-Fiqhī* (Dimashq: Dār al-Fikr, 1993), pp. 31-32.

<sup>3</sup>Apart from being influenced by the ideas of Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā in his *Tafsīr al-Manār*, the reformists' idea of *bid‘ah* is strongly influenced by several classical writings on the issue, such as *al-I’tisām* of al-Shātibī, *al-Hawādith wa al-Bidd‘* of al-Ṭurṭūshī, *Iqtidā’ al-Sirāt al-Mustaqīm* of Ibn Taymiyyah and *Inkār al-Ḥawādith wa al-Bidd‘* of Ibn Waddah. As well as these classical writings, they also refer to several modern writings which are in agreement with their ideas such as *al-Ibdā‘ fī Maḍār al-*

Shāṭibī's definition in his *al-I'tiṣām*, as an invented religious practice that has the resemblance of lawfulness (*al-shar'īyyah*) whose purpose is the excessive (*mubālaghah*) worship of God, or which has a purpose similar to those of the lawful practices.<sup>4</sup> For the reformists, any newly innovated practice in religious matters is regarded as a blameworthy *bid'ah*. This is clearly evidenced from the sayings of the Prophet:

"Whoever performs action which is not our command, it is rejected"<sup>5</sup>;

Al-'Irbād b. Sāriyah said: "One day the Prophet led us in prayer, then faced us and gave us a lengthy exhortation at which the eyes shed tears and the hearts were afraid. A man said: 'O Messenger of God, it seems as if it was a farewell exhortation, so what injunction do you give us?' He then said: 'I enjoin you to fear God, and to hear and obey even if it be an Abyssinian slave, for those of you who live after me will see great disagreement. You must follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it. Avoid novelties (*muḥdathāt al-umūr*), for every novelty is innovation (*bid'ah*), and every innovation is an error (*ḍalālāh*)."<sup>6</sup>

The Prophet also used to say in his sermon: "The best speech is that embodied in the Book of God, and the best guidance is the guidance given by Muḥammad. The most evil affairs are novelties (*muḥdathātu-hā*), and every innovation (*bid'ah*) is an error,"<sup>7</sup> and in the narration of al-Nasā'ī, the Prophet continued: "and every error is in Hellfire."<sup>8</sup>

The reformists maintain that through these traditions, the Prophet clearly characterized all *bid'ah* in religion as error. A key point of the reformists' standpoint is the phrase "every *bid'ah* is an error (*kullu bid'atin ḍalālāh*)" in the last two

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*Ibtidā'* of 'Alī Maḥfūz, *al-Sunan wa al-Mubtad'āt* of Muḥammad al-Hawāmidī; and the writings of Saudi scholars such as Abū Bakr Jābir al-Jazā'irī, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Bāz and Muḥammad al-'Uthaymin. Many of these writings, especially the modern ones, have been translated into Malay.

<sup>4</sup>See Abū Ishāq al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām*, edited by Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā. (Cairo: Dār Iḥyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, no date), vol. 1, p. 37. See also, Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Bid'ah* (Kuala Pilah: KTF Institut, 1987), p. 15; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab* (Kuala Pilah: KTF Institut, 1984), pp. 18-19; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab Tentang Berbagai Masalah Agama* (Bandung: Penerbit Diponegoro, 1977), vol. 2, pp. 737-738.

<sup>5</sup>*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, in "Kitāb al-Ṣulḥ," 2,499; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, in "Kitāb Aqḍiyah," 3,242 & 3,243; *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in "Kitāb al-Sunnah," 3,990; *Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah," 14; *al-Musnad*, in "Bāqī Musnad al-Anṣār," 23,311.

<sup>6</sup>*Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, in "Kitāb al-Sunnah," 3,991; *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah," 95.

<sup>7</sup>*Sunan Ibn Mājah*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah," 45; *Sunan al-Dārimī*, in "Kitāb al-Muqaddimah," 208.

<sup>8</sup>*Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, in "Kitāb Ṣalāt al-'Idayn," 1,560.

traditions. According to the science of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), when the word “every” (*kullu*) is annexed (*yuḍāf*) to an indefinite noun (*ism nakirah*), such as “*bidʿah*” in this context, it denotes the generality (*ʿumūm*) of the noun without restriction. It is understood in view of the wording of the tradition, that the *ḥukm* of *bidʿah* in religious matters is blameworthy (*madhmūmah*) and therefore prohibited (*ḥarām*), and the generalization of this *ḥukm* remains until it is proven otherwise by other primary textual evidence. Hence, the reformists uphold the principle that every single *bidʿah* in religious matters is an error, and there are no so-called good *bidʿahs* (*bidʿah ḥasanah*) in religion, as maintained by some scholars.<sup>9</sup>

It is noteworthy that the reformists’ idea of *bidʿah* is discussed in the context of religious matters only, since they claim that the Prophet himself used the term *bidʿah* specifically to refer to something innovated in the religion, as appears in the phrase, “whoever innovates something in this business of ours (*fī amri-nā hādhā*)....” i.e. in the religion. “In the religion” in this context is understood to refer to the fundamentals of the religion that have been set out in detail, namely those matters regarding *ʿaqidah* and *ʿibādah* which are known as fixed matters (*thawābit*) and leave no room for *ijtihād*. Matters concerning *muʿāmalāt* and *ʿādāt*, the non-fundamentals of the religion, of which only the general principles are prescribed in the primary texts and where *ijtihād* is permitted, are excluded, since they are changeable matters (*mutaghayyirāt*) that are subject to changes in time and circumstances. Therefore, innovated things in the realms of *muʿāmalāt* and *ʿādāt*, i.e. mundane affairs, are not real *bidʿah* according to the reformists’ perspective, and are named *bidʿah* only in the light of the linguistic meaning of the word. This kind of “*bidʿah*” is permitted as long as it is in harmony with the principles of the Shariʿah. This is also what they categorize as *maṣāliḥ ʿāmmah* or *maṣāliḥ mursalah* (public interest), a legal doctrine held to

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<sup>9</sup>Basri Ibrahim, *Khilafiah, Bidʿah & Masalah Umum* (Kuala Lumpur: Darul Nuʿman, 1997), p. 129; Dr. Ruhani, *Kesesatan Bidʿah dan Keharaman Mereka-rekakan Ibadah* (Kota Bharu: Pustaka ASA, 1985), pp. 71-72; Abu Bakar Ashaari, *ʿIbādah Rasūl Allāh* (Singapore: Penerbitan Qalam, 1957), pp. 169-170; Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Bidʿah*, op.cit., pp. 17-22; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 20-22, 133-135; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 740-744.

ensure benefit to the *ummah* concerning matters of *mu'āmalāt* and *ʿādāt*.<sup>10</sup> Hence, they maintain that it is wrong to regard all innovated things as *bidʿah*, but they become *bidʿah* if they relate to matters of *ʿaqīdah* or *ʿibādah*.<sup>11</sup>

However, the reformists' idea of *bidʿah* seems to be apparently inconsistent, as on the one hand, they seem to be very strict by perceiving everything new in the matter of *ʿibādah* as a blameworthy *bidʿah*, but on the other hand, particularly in the case of *zakāh*, an important *ʿibādah* which is the third pillar of Islām, they seem to be the opposite by suggesting the expansion of zakatable wealth beyond what was originally specified by the Prophet. The same applies to their suggestion to consider astronomical calculation to confirm the beginning of the lunar month, a method which was unknown at the time of the Prophet. As far as the reformists' definition of *bidʿah* is concerned, the expansion of zakatable wealth and the using of astronomical calculation to fix the lunar month should be in the category of blameworthy *bidʿah*, but nevertheless they have a different answer pertaining to this. They do not regard such suggestions as *bidʿah* for certain reasons. Firstly, *zakāh* is not a ritual form of *ʿibādah*, but is of the material form. Paying *zakāh* is an act of *ʿibādah*, but the substances of *zakāh* concerns material matters whose place is under the category of *ʿādāt*. Fasting of Ramaḍān is also an act of *ʿibādah*, but confirming the beginning of the month is a technical matter which also comes under the category of *ʿādāt*. At this point, the terms *ʿibādah* and *ʿādāt* need to be clarified. For them, "a commandment or interdiction that cannot be reasonably understood in detail (*mā lam yuʿqal maʿnā-hu bi al-tafṣīl*) is one of the matters of *ʿibādah*, such as purity (*ṭahārāt*), the various prayers, fasting and pilgrimage; while something that can be reasonably understood, and whose benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) or harm (*mafsadah*) can be known, is one of the matters of *ʿādāt*, such as marriage, divorce, sale, rental and crime."<sup>12</sup> The expansion of

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<sup>10</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *ʿibādah Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 174; Basri Ibrahim, *Khilafiah, Bid'ah & Masalah Umum*, op.cit., pp. 161-164; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 21-22.

<sup>11</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *ʿibādah Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 174; Basri Ibrahim, *Khilafiah, Bid'ah & Masalah Umum*, op.cit., pp. 292; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 21-22.

<sup>12</sup>See Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali Kepada al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah* (Jakarta: Pustaka Bulan Bintang, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. 1996), pp. 254-256; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 740, based on al-Shāṭibī's statement in *al-Iṭīṣām*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 190-194



zakatable wealth and the using of astronomical calculation to confirm the beginning of Ramaḍān as suggested certainly concerns matters of *‘ādāt* which are propounded for the benefit of the *ummah* in accordance with changes in time and contemporary needs. These suggestions, they claim, are not only in harmony with the basic principles of the Sharī‘ah, but are also implicitly demanded in the primary textual evidences.

Secondly, as regards the expansion of zakatable wealth, the reformists state that this expansion is not really a new thing, but had taken place in the time of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.<sup>13</sup> The new things introduced by the Rightly Guided Caliphs should not be regarded as *bid‘ah*, but in fact are a Sunnah that should be followed, as indicated in the previously stated tradition: "... You must follow my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs. Hold to it and stick fast to it." Thus, they insist that the suggestion to expand *zakāh* resources is not to create a *bid‘ah* in the religion, but to bring benefits to the *ummah* through the justification of the principles and objectives of the religion.

To this extent, the reformists' perception of *bid‘ah* can be summarized as follows: Every new matter is not necessarily a *bid‘ah*. It is a *bid‘ah* if it concerns the basic fundamentals of the religion, particularly matters of *‘aqīdah* and the ritual types of *‘ibādah* which have been fixed by the Lawgiver. Every *bid‘ah* is blameworthy and its perpetrator commits a sin. A new matter is not a *bid‘ah* if it concerns *‘muāmalāt*, *‘ādāt*, or worldly matters, but it comes under the term *maṣāliḥ mursalah* if it brings benefit to the *ummah* and is in accordance with the principles of the Sharī‘ah.<sup>14</sup> Accordingly, uttering the intention of prayers, reciting certain prayers before the *adhān*, chanting blessings upon the Prophet between the two *khuṭbahs* of the Friday prayer or between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, reciting the *talqīn* after burial, performing the

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<sup>13</sup>As mentioned earlier in the Chapter Four, pp. 191-192 on how the second caliph ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb had introduced *zakāh* on honey and horses bred for commercial purposed, while this was never practiced in the time of the Prophet.

<sup>14</sup>If the new thing is against the principles of the Sharī‘ah, they term it as either *maṣāliḥ mufsidah* (bad or unacknowledged interest) or *ma‘ṣiyyah* (disobedience) depending on the degree of the contravention. See Basri Ibrahim, *Khilafiah, Bid‘ah dan Maslahah Umum*, op.cit., p. 70.



*tahlīl* ceremony and the like as practiced by the traditionalists are considered blameworthy *bid'ah*, while recording the Qur'ān and Prophetic traditions in writing, the study of the disciplines of Arabic in order to understand the Qur'ān, writing books on beneficial subjects, building schools and hospitals, and similar matters are considered to come under the category of *maṣāliḥ mursalah*.

### ***Bid'ah Ḥasanah and Bid'ah Dālālāh***

From the traditionalists' point of view, the concept of *bid'ah* is not as understood by the reformists. As loyal adherents of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, their idea of *bid'ah* is adopted from the viewpoints of the scholars in the *madhhab*.<sup>15</sup> For them, *bid'ah* is referred to as everything new which is not stated in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah regardless whether it is good or not, and thus, they simply define *bid'ah* as "an action which was unknown at the time of the Prophet."<sup>16</sup> According to them, the tradition "every new thing is a *bid'ah*, and every *bid'ah* is an error" does not refer to all new things without restriction, but only to those which are against the principles of the Sharī'ah. The use of the word "every" (*kullu*) in the tradition does not indicate an absolute generalization, for there are many examples of similar generalizations in the Qur'ān and Sunnah that are not applicable without restriction, but rather are qualified by restrictions found in other primary textual evidence.<sup>17</sup> In this regard, the generalization in these traditions has been specified by other traditions, namely by the following:

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<sup>15</sup>Among the scholars of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* whose writings are always referred to by the traditionalists regarding this issue are al-ʿIzz b. ʿAbd al-Salām in his *Qawāʿid al-Aḥkām*, Abū Shāmah in his *al-Bāʿith ʿalā Inkār al-Bidaʿ*, and al-Nawawī in some of his writings.

<sup>16</sup>Daud Fatani, *al-Jawāhir al-Saniyyah* (Penang: Percetakan al-Maʿārif, n.d), p. 23. This definition is actually based on the definition given by al-ʿIzz b. ʿAbd al-Salām, a prominent scholar of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*. See al-ʿIzz b. ʿAbd al-Salām, *Qawāʿid al-Aḥkām* (Cairo: Dār al-Istiqāmah, n.d. ), vol. 2, p. 172.

<sup>17</sup>Daud Fatani, *al-Jawāhir al-Saniyyah*, op.cit., p. 37. See also, Wan Mohd. Shaghīr Abdullah, *Penutup Perdebatan Islam Alaf Kedua di Dunia Melayu*, (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 1999), pp. 116-117; Haron Din, "Persoalan Bid'ah dan Salah Faham Masyarakat Tentangnya," (Audio Cassette), distributed by Pustaka Mujahid, no date.

The Prophet said: "He who inaugurates a good *sunnah* in Islam (*man sanna fi-al-Islām sunnatan ḥasanatan*) earns the reward of it and all who perform it after him without diminishing their own rewards in the slightest. And he who introduces a bad *sunnah* in Islam gets the sin of it and all who perform it after him without diminishing their own sins in the slightest."<sup>18</sup>

‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd al-Qārī said: "I went out in the company of ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb one night in Ramaḍān to the mosque and found the people praying in different groups, with a man praying alone or a man praying with a little group behind him. ‘Umar said: 'In my opinion it would be better to collect these people under the leadership of one reciter [i.e. to let them pray in congregation]'. So, he made up his mind to congregate them behind Ubayy b. Ka‘b. Then on another night I went again in his company and the people were praying behind their reciter. On that, ‘Umar remarked, 'What a good *bid‘ah* this is (*nī‘m al-bid‘ah ḥādhihi*); but the prayer which they do not perform, because they are sleeping at its time is better than the one they are performing.' He meant the prayer in the last part of the night. In those days people used to pray in the early part of the night."<sup>19</sup>

The first tradition indicates that not every new thing is bad, and that there are new things that are good, while the second one clearly shows that ‘Umar himself created a new thing pertaining to a matter of *‘ibādah* which he later described as a good *bid‘ah*. Based on these traditions, the traditionalists maintain that the generalization of the tradition "every new thing is *bid‘ah*, and every *bid‘ah* is an error" has been restricted only to those which nothing in the Shar‘ah attests to the validity of. This idea, the traditionalists assert, is exactly in accordance with what has been pointed out by al-Shāfi‘ī, that "something that is innovated and contradicts the Qur’ān, or the Sunnah, or *ijmā‘*, or *āthār*, is an erroneous *bid‘ah* (*bid‘ah ḍalālāh*). While something that is innovated and does not contradict any of these, is a good *bid‘ah* (*bid‘ah ḥasanah*).<sup>20</sup>

The reformists, however, disagree that the generalization of the tradition "every new thing is *bid‘ah*, and every *bid‘ah* is an error" is restricted by the other traditions. They maintain that the wording of the tradition "*man sanna fi-al-Islām*

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<sup>18</sup>Narrated by Muslim and others. See *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, "Kitāb al-Zakāh," 1,691, "Kitāb al-‘Ilm," 4,830; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, "Kitāb al-‘Ilm," 2,599.

<sup>19</sup>Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Mālik with slightly different versions. See *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, "Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Tarāwīḥ," 1,871; *al-Muwatṭa‘*, "Kitāb al-Nidā’ li-al-Ṣalāh," 231.

<sup>20</sup>As quoted in Muṣṭafā al-Bughā and Muḥy al-Dīn Miṣṭū, *al-Wāfi fi Sharḥ al-Arbā‘ in al-Nawawīyyah* (Beirut: Dār Ibn Kathīr, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 1986), p. 29.

*sunnatan ḥasanatan...*” shows that this tradition concerns about *sunnah*, not *bidʿah*. *Sunnah* and *bidʿah* are two opposed terms. The word *sunnah* in both the language of Arabs and the Sharīʿah means way or custom. Thus, “good *sunnah*” and “bad *sunnah*” in the context of the above tradition should be interpreted as good way or bad way, and cannot possibly mean anything else.<sup>21</sup> The Sunnah of the Prophet is his way of acting, ordering, accepting and rejecting, and also comprises the way of his Rightly Guided Caliphs who followed his way of acting, ordering, accepting and rejecting. Therefore, practices that are newly begun must be examined in the light of the Sunnah of the Prophet, i.e. his way of acceptance and rejection, meaning that if new practices are in harmony with the Sunnah of the Prophet, they should be considered as good *sunnah*, and if they contravene his Sunnah, they should be regarded as bad *sunnah*.<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, the reformists insist that the tradition “*kullu bidʿatin ḍalālāh*” and the tradition “*man sanna*” do not relate to each other for they concern two different matters, i.e. *bidʿah* and *sunnah*, and thus the latter cannot specify the generalization of the former. *Sunnah* could be either good or bad, but *bidʿah* is bad. To compromise between the two traditions, they affirm, it is necessary to return to the concept of *bidʿah* propounded earlier: that new matters are considered *bidʿah* if they concern the basic fundamentals of the religion, namely matters of *ʿaqīdah* and the ritual type of *ʿibādah* which have been completely fixed by the Lawgiver. New practices that concern other matters, namely, *muʿāmalāt* and *ʿādāt*, or worldly matters, are not considered *bidʿah*, but are termed *maṣāliḥ*. This opens room for the reformists to regard them also, in a general context, as *sunnah*: if they are in accordance with the Sunnah of the Prophet, they should be called good *sunnah*; and if not, they will be called bad *sunnah*. For them, such an interpretation is more acceptable and in accordance with the historical context of the tradition (*sabab wurūd*

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<sup>21</sup>According to Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, the word *sunnah* in this tradition should be understood in its lexical meaning (*maʿnā-hu al-lughawī*), i.e. one’s deed whether its good or bad, or one’s regular action, good it be or bad. See Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Sunnah wa al-Bidʿah* (Cairo: Maktabah Wahbah, 1999), p. 7.

<sup>22</sup>Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Bidʿah*, op.cit., pp. 20-21; Baharuddin Ayudin, *Bidʿah* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Cahaya, 1994), pp. 17-19.

*al-ḥadīth*) which was about giving charity,<sup>23</sup> a matter that does not concern the basic fundamentals of Islam.<sup>24</sup>

Concerning the saying of ‘Umar “what a good *bid‘ah* this is (*nī‘m al-bid‘ah ḥādhihi*)”<sup>25</sup> in approving the congregational *tarāwīḥ* prayer, the reformists affirm that *bid‘ah* in the context of this tradition must not be considered *bid‘ah* as such, but must be interpreted as *bid‘ah* in its lexical meaning, for something that was initiated by the Rightly Guided Caliphs was a *sunnah*, as the Prophet stated: ‘Follow my *sunnah* and the *sunnah* of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.’”<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the congregational *tarāwīḥ* prayer as a matter of fact was a *Sunnah* of the Prophet, but was later abandoned by him as he was afraid that it might be considered obligatory for the *ummah*. Al-Bukhārī and Muslim narrate that ‘A’ishah said:

“One night the Prophet performed the prayer in the mosque and the people followed him. The next night he also performed the prayer and too many people gathered. On the third and the fourth nights more people gathered, but the Prophet did not come out to them. In the morning he said, “I saw what you were doing and nothing stopped me from coming to you, but that I feared that it (i.e. the prayer) might be enjoined on you.’ And that happened in the month of Ramaḍān.”<sup>27</sup>

The effort of ‘Umar to collect the people to pray *tarāwīḥ* in congregation in mosque should be seen as a revival of the *sunnah* of the Prophet, as he saw that there was no

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<sup>23</sup>Muslim and others narrate from Jarīr b. Abd Allāh that some desert Arabs clad in woollen clothes came to the Prophet Muḥammad. He saw them in a sad plight as they had been hard pressed by need. He exhorted people to give charity, but they showed some reluctance until signs of anger could be seen on his face. Then someone from the Ansar came with a purse containing silver. Then came another person and then other people followed them in succession until signs of happiness could be seen on his face. Thereupon the Prophet said: “He who inaugurates a good *sunnah* in Islam (*man sanna fi-al-Islām sunnatan ḥasanatan*) earns the reward of it... (to the end of the tradition). See Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, “Kitāb al-Zakāh,” 1,691, “Kitāb al-‘Ilm,” 4,830; *Sunan al-Tirmidhī*, “Kitāb al-‘Ilm,” 2,599.

<sup>24</sup>Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali Kepada al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, op.cit., pp. 270-271; Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Bid‘ah*, op.cit., pp. 29-31.

<sup>25</sup>In the narration of Mālik: “*nī‘mat al-bid‘ah ḥādhihi*.” See *al-Muwatṭa’*, “Kitāb al-Nidā’ li-al-Ṣalāh,” 231.

<sup>26</sup>Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Bid‘ah*, op.cit., p. 46. See p. 255 for full text ḥadīth.

<sup>27</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, “Kitāb al-Jum‘ah,” 1,061; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, “Kitāb Ṣalāt al-Musāfirīn wa-Qaṣru-hā,” 1,270.

longer any reason for its abandonment at his time.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the reformists conclude that the saying of ‘Umar “what a good *bid‘ah* this is” cannot specify the generalization of the tradition “every *bid‘ah* is an error,” and also cannot justify good *bid‘ah* in religion.

It is essential to note that most of the traditionalists’ practices which are claimed by the reformists to be *bid‘ah* concern supererogatory acts of *‘ibādah*. These supererogatory *‘ibādah*, such as reciting *dhikr* and *du‘ā* after the prayer or at other times, reciting the Qur’ān, reciting blessing upon the Prophet, reciting *tahlīl* and the like, which are known in the context of *fiqh* as general acts of *‘ibādah* (*‘ibādah muṭlaqah*), have a basis in primary textual evidence, but the way they should be practised is not specifically prescribed. The traditionalists believe that in this matters they can use their own personal reasoning (*ijtihād*) to practising them in certain ways and at specific occasions depending on local circumstances and necessities.<sup>29</sup> This standpoint is based on the fact that there are a great number of traditions indicating that many Companions of the Prophet had initiated new acts, forms of *dhikr* and *du‘ā* that the Prophet had never previously done or ordered to be done. The Companions did them because of their inference and conviction that such acts were part of the good that Islam brought, and in general terms urged the like to be done, in accordance with the saying of the Prophet as stated before: “He who inaugurates a good *sunnah* in Islam earns the reward of it and of all who perform it after him without diminishing their own rewards in the slightest ....”<sup>30</sup>

Departing from this point, the traditionalists maintain that many of the Companions of the Prophet performed various acts through their own personal reasoning, and that the Sunnah of the Prophet was to accept those that were acts of *‘ibādah* and good deeds confirmable with what the Shar‘ah had established and not in conflict with it, and to reject those which were otherwise. For example, al-Bukhārī

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<sup>28</sup>Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Bid‘ah*, op.cit., pp. 46-47.

<sup>29</sup>Haron Din, “Persoalan Bid‘ah, op.cit. See also, Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Adab Berijtihad dan Berikhtilaf Mengikut Syariat* (Selangor: IPI, 2001), p. 15.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*



and Muslim narrate that Abū Hurayrah said:

"At the Fajr prayer the Prophet said to Bilāl, 'O Bilal, tell me which of your acts in Islam you are most hopeful about, for I have heard the footfall of your sandals in paradise.' He replied, 'I have done nothing I am more hopeful about than the fact that I do not perform ablution at any time of the night or day without praying with that ablution whatever has been destined for me to pray.'"<sup>31</sup>

Quoting Ibn Hajar in his *Fath al-Bārī*, the traditionalists emphasize that the *ḥadīth* shows it is permissible to use personal reasoning in choosing times for supererogatory acts of *ʿibādah*, for Bilāl reached the conclusion he mentioned by his own inference and the Prophet confirmed him therein.<sup>32</sup>

Al-Bukhārī also narrates that ʿĀʾishah said:

"The Prophet dispatched a man at the head of a military expedition who recited the Qurʾān for his companions in prayer, finishing each recital with *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ*. When they returned, they mentioned this to the Prophet who told them: 'Ask him why he does this.' When they asked him, the man replied: 'Because it describes the All-merciful, and I love to recite it.' The Prophet said to them: 'Tell him God loves him.'"<sup>33</sup>

In a narration of al-Bukhārī, Abū Saʿīd al-Khudrī is reported to have said:

"A man heard another reciting *Sūrat al-Ikhlāṣ* over and over again. In the morning he went to the Prophet and mentioned it to him as if he thought that it was not enough to recite. The Prophet said: 'By Him in whose hand is my soul, is equal to one-third of the Qurʾān.'"<sup>34</sup>

The aforementioned traditions show that the Prophet confirmed the person's restricting himself to this *sūrah* while praying, despite it not being what the Prophet himself did, for although the Prophet's practice of reciting from all of the Qurʾān was superior, the man's act was within the general parameters of the *sunnah* and there was nothing blameworthy about it. From these evidences, the traditionalists sum up

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<sup>31</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Jumuʿah," 1081; Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, "Kitāb Faḍāʾil al-Ṣaḥābah," 4497.

<sup>32</sup>Ibn Hajar al-ʿAsqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī* (Cairo: Dār al-Kitāb al-Jadīd, 1970), vol. 1, p. 384.

<sup>33</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb al-Adhān," 6827.

<sup>34</sup>Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, "Kitāb Faḍāʾil al-Qurʾān," 4627.



that any new matter must be judged according to the principles and primary texts of the Sharī'ah: whatever is attested to by the Sharī'ah as being good is acknowledged as a good *bid'ah*, and whatever is attested to by the Sharī'ah as being a contravention and bad is rejected as a blameworthy *bid'ah*.<sup>35</sup>

The reformists argue that the Companions' acts which are based on their own personal reasoning must not be considered as *bid'ah*, but were actually part of the Sunnah. There has been a consensus of all Muslim scholars to regard everything done by the Prophet's Companions which was agreed and confirmed by the Prophet as being a part of his Sunnah, and this is what is known as *sunnah taqrīriyyah* (affirmative Sunnah). The reformists maintain that the traditionalists' argument regarding new acts initiated by the Companions of the Prophet to justify the use of their own personal reasoning to restrict certain ways in performing the general acts of *'ibādah*, is simply unacceptable, for, as ordinary people, they have no right to make exceptions to what has been generalized by the Lawgiver. They assert that among the aspects of *bid'ah* is to place restrictions on acts of *'ibādah* which have been generalized by the Sharī'ah, such as specifying times, places and numbers. On this particular point, Abū Shāmah is quoted as saying; "It is not permissible to specify an act of *'ibādah* to a time that has not been specified by the Sharī'ah, as all the actions of righteousness are applicable to all times. There is no specific time that is better than another, with the exception of what the Sharī'ah has declared to be so, such as fasting on the day of *'Arafah* and *'Āshūrā'*, praying in the later part of night and performing the lesser pilgrimage in the month of Ramaḍān. It is not for people to specify, as this is for the Lawgiver..."<sup>36</sup> Hence, the reformists maintain that the scholars have established the principle that "what the Lawgiver has generalized is to be performed according to its general way, and it is not permissible to restrict it or to limit it."<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup>Haron Din, "Persoalan Bid'ah, op.cit. Daud b. Abdullah Fatani, *al-Jawāhir al-Saniyyah*, op.cit., p. 37.

<sup>36</sup>As quoted in Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Ibadah Rasulullah*, op.cit., pp. 70-71.

<sup>37</sup>Basri Ibrahim, *Khilafiah, Bid'ah & Masalah Umum*, op.cit., p. 75; Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali kepada al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, op.cit., pp. 134-135.

## Classification of *Bid'ah*

As the traditionalists perceive that not every *bid'ah* is erroneous, they classify it, according to its benefit, harm, or indifference, into the standard legal categories of obligatory, recommended, forbidden, reprehensible and permissible. This classification, which is based on Ibn 'Abd al-Salām's classification, can be illustrated as follows:<sup>38</sup>

- (i) The first category is *bid'ah* that is obligatory, such as recording the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet in writing when it was feared that something might be lost from them; the study of the disciplines of Arabic that are necessary to understand the Qur'ān and the Sunnah such as grammar, word declension and lexicography; the classification of the Sunnah of the Prophet in order to distinguish the genuine from the spurious ones; and suchlike matters.
- (ii) The second category is recommended *bid'ah*, such as building schools; writing books on beneficial subjects, extensive research into fundamentals and particular applications of the Sharī'ah; in-depth study of Arabic linguistics; performing *tarāwīḥ* prayers in congregation; and commemorating the birth (*mawlid*) of the Prophet Muḥammad.
- (iii) The third category is permissible *bid'ah*, such as shaking hands after the prayers; and having enjoyable food, drink and housing.
- (iv) The fourth category is reprehensible *bid'ah*, such as decorating mosques, embellishing the Qur'ān; and having a backup man (*musammī'*) who loudly repeats the *takbīr* of the *imām* when the latter's voice is already clearly audible to the people behind them.
- (v) The fifth category is that of forbidden *bid'ah*, particularly those that concern

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<sup>38</sup>Daud b. Abdullah Fatani, *al-Jawāhir al-Saniyyah*, op.cit., p. 37; idem, *Furṣ al-Masā'il* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), vol. 1, pp. 13-14; See also, al-'Izz b. 'Abd al-Salām, *Qawā'id al-Aḥkām* (Cairo: Dār al-Istiḳāmah, n.d.), vol. 2, p. 172. In their original classification, the obligatory *bid'ah* comes first, followed by the forbidden *bid'ah*, recommendable *bid'ah*, reprehensible *bid'ah* and lastly permissible *bid'ah*.

the tenets of faith, such as the *bid'ah* of the Mu'tazilah, the Qadariyyah, the Murji'ah and the Khawārij; and giving positions of authority in the Sharfah to those unfit for them.

The traditionalists claim that this classification of *bid'ah* made by Ibn 'Abd al-Salām was established on a firm basis in Islamic jurisprudence and legal principles, and was confirmed by the vast majority of scholars. They view it as obligatory to apply these to the new matters and contingencies that occur with changing times and peoples who live in them.<sup>39</sup> One may not support the denial of this classification by clinging to the hadith "every *bid'ah* is error," for the only form of *bid'ah* that is without exception error is that concerning the tenets of faith, like the *bid'ah* of the Mu'tazilah, the Qadariyyah, the Murji'ah, and others, that contradicts the beliefs of the early Muslims. This is erroneous *bid'ah* as it is harmful and devoid of benefit.<sup>40</sup> As for *bid'ah* in actions, meaning the occurrence of an act connected with *'ibādah* or something else that did not exist in the first century of Islam, it must be judged according to the five categories mentioned by Ibn 'Abd al-Salām. To claim that such an innovation is misguidance without further qualification is simply not applicable to it, for new things are among the exigencies brought into being by the passage of time and generations, and nothing that is new lacks a ruling of God that is applicable to it, whether explicitly mentioned in primary texts, or inferable from them in some way. They further assert that the only reason that Islamic law can be valid for every time and place and be the consummate and most perfect of all divine laws is because it comprises general methodological principles and universal criteria, together with the ability its scholars have been endowed with to understand its primary texts, the knowledge of different types of analogy and the other excellences that characterize it. If one is to rule that every new act that has come into being after the first century of Islam is an erroneous *bid'ah* without considering whether it entails benefit or harm, this would invalidate a large portion of the fundamental bases of the *shar'ah* as well as those rulings established by analogical reasoning, and would narrow and limit the Sharī'ah's vast

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<sup>39</sup>Haron Din, "Persoalan Bid'ah, op.cit.

<sup>40</sup>Ibid.

and comprehensive scope.<sup>41</sup>

This classification of *bid'ah* is, however, rejected by the reformists who maintain that creating such a classification has no basis in the primary textual evidence. Strongly influenced by the writing of al-Shāṭibī in his *al-I'tiṣām*, they assert that this classification by Ibn 'Abd al-Salām is rejected by al-Shāṭibī, and all the examples propounded by Ibn 'Abd al-Salām, except those which fall into the categories of forbidden and reprehensible, are denied by him as being *bid'ah*. Al-Shāṭibī is quoted as saying:

"This classification is an invented matter which is not based on evidence, and furthermore, there is a contradiction within the classification itself. This is because the reality of *bid'ah* is that it is not based on evidence; neither from the primary textual evidence, nor from its methodologies. If there are evidences that indicate that something is obligatory, or recommended, or permissible, it is therefore not a *bid'ah*, and practising it would fall into the category of general actions that are commanded or optional. Therefore, combining the matters of *bid'ah* together with the evidences that prove their obligation, or recommendation, or permissibility, is a combination of two opposite things."<sup>42</sup>

In their clarification regarding the examples propounded by the traditionalists, the reformists, by referring to al-Shāṭibī's comments on Ibn 'Abd al-Salām's classification, accept the categories of forbidden and reprehensible *bid'ah* as *bid'ah*, but other examples, such as giving positions of authority in the Sharī'ah to those unfit for them are not regarded as *bid'ah*. This is because such examples already contravene the principles of the religion and are clearly prohibited in primary textual evidence, and thus fall into the category of forbidden matters, the practice of which is a type of *ma'ṣiyah* (disobedience) and not *bid'ah*. They also refuse to consider the examples in the categories of obligatory *bid'ah* as *bid'ah*, but regard them as parts of the *maṣāliḥ mursalah*. Some of the examples in the category of recommended, such as building schools and writing books on beneficial subjects, are considered as being

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<sup>41</sup>Ibid.

<sup>42</sup>Al-Shāṭibī, *al-I'tiṣām*, op.cit., vol. 1, pp. 191-192. See also, Abdullah al-Qari, *Kesesatan Bid'ah dan Keharaman Mereka-rekakan Ibadat* (Kota Bharu: Pustaka ASA, 1985), pp. 68-69; Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali Kepada Al-Qur-an dan As-Sunnah*, op.cit., pp. 240-242; A. Hassan, *Soal Jawab*, vol. 2, op.cit., pp. 742-743.

*maṣāliḥ mursalah*, while others, such as performing *tarāwīḥ* prayers in congregation are viewed as being part of the Sunnah; and commemorating the birth (*mawlid*) of the Prophet Muḥammad is held as a blameworthy *bid'ah*. As regards the examples of the category of permissible *bid'ah*, such as having enjoyable food and drink, the reformists argue that this example is included in the permissible matters, and if it is done beyond the limit would fall into the category of forbidden matters, but is not considered as a *bid'ah*. Repeating their idea of *bid'ah*, the reformists emphasize that new matters are not necessarily *bid'ah*, but they are *bid'ah* if they concern the basic fundamentals of the religion, i.e. *‘aqidah* and the ritual form of *‘ibadah*. If they concern mundane affairs, they are subject to judgement based on the principles and the methodologies of the Shari‘ah.<sup>43</sup>

It might be concluded from the arguments of both parties that the disputation between the reformists and the traditionalists regarding the issue of *bid'ah* is a result of their different perceptions in interpreting and understanding the primary textual evidence regarding *bid'ah*, which thus drives them to define *bid'ah* differently. For the reformists who narrow the definition of *bid'ah*, the term *bid'ah* refers only to new matters that concern matters of *‘aqidah* and the ritual form of *‘ibadah*. Thus, they perceive every *bid'ah* to be an error. Contrarily, the traditionalists expand the definition of *bid'ah* to all new things in the domain of life, and thus classify *bid'ah* into five categories of rulings based on its conformity with the principles and the methodologies of *shar‘ah*.

As a part of a grey area, both perceptions are seem reasonable and acceptable, since they are based on primary textual evidence and built on the respective skill of each party in using the yardstick of the Shari‘ah within the boundaries of the principles and methodologies of the religion. However, the different perceptions turn into conflict as both parties show a lack of tolerance in accepting differences of perspective. The reformists in their efforts to call the Malays to return to a pristine Islam, label many of the Malays' religious practices as blameworthy *bid'ah*. In return,

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<sup>43</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *‘Ibādah Rasūl Allāh*, op.cit., p. 184; Basri Ibrahim, *Khilafiah, Bid'ah & Masalahah Umum*, op.cit., pp. 161-164; Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 67-69.



the traditionalists, in defending their traditional orthodox practices, accuse the reformists as being a group of misguided people who are trying to disunite the solidarity of the Malay *ummah*. Indeed, the word "*bid'ah*" is a very sensitive one among Malays as it brings a bad connotation which refers to wrongdoing in religious practices, even if the traditionalists have a detailed classification of it. Thus, if their deeply rooted practices are labelled as *bid'ah*, the traditionalists have no choice but to strongly defend them, and offensively return the label of *bid'ah* to the reformists.

### Perceptions Regarding the Concept of *Taqlīd* of a *Madhhab* and the Need for *Ijtihād*

The issue of *taqlīd* of a *madhhab* has also been a fundamental factor of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists regarding matters of *'ibādah*, as both parties hold opposite standpoints on this issue. *Taqlīd* is defined by the jurists as "adopting a person's saying without knowing its proof,"<sup>44</sup> and in this particular context refers to the practice of adopting the juristic formulations or standpoints of certain *madhhabs* in matters of religious practices without considering it necessary to know their evidences.<sup>45</sup> In the context of Malaysia, *taqlīd* is held by the traditionalists as necessary or obligatory for ordinary people who have not reached the ability of performing *ijtihād*.<sup>46</sup> Contrarily, the reformists who refer to *taqlīd* as blind imitation

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<sup>44</sup>The word *taqlīd*, which is derived from the word *qallada*, literally means placing something around neck, which encircles the neck, and technically means the acceptance of a saying of a person without him knowing its evidence. A *muqallid* is a person who practises *taqlīd*. See E. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*, op.cit., vol.1, pp. 2557-2558; Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-ʿArab*, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 365-368. In the context of Islamic jurisprudence, it signifies acting according to the decision of a *mujtahid* without knowing its evidence. See for example, al-Āmidī, *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Ṣabīḥ, 1347 H), vol. 3, p. 166; al-Ghazālī, *al-Muṣṭaṣfā min ʿIlm al-Uṣūl* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Muṣṭafā Muḥammad, 1356 H), vol. 2, p. 123; al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl* (Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Ṣabīḥ, 1349 H), p. 234; Ibn Qudāmah, *Rawḍat al-Nāẓir* (Cairo: al-Maktabat al-Salafiyyah 1342 H), vol. 2, p. 450; Saʿdī Abū Jayb, *al-Qāmūs al-Fiqhī*, op.cit., p. 308.

<sup>45</sup>*Taqlīd* in matter of *'aqidah* is perceived by almost all scholars as forbidden, while *taqlīd* in matter of Islamic practices is disputed among the jurists: some jurists permit it and some other prohibit it. See for example, Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islāmī* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1987), vol. 2, p. 1122-1236.

<sup>46</sup>Daud Fatani, *Fath al-Mannān* (Penang: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.), p. 41; idem, *Ward al-Ḍawāhir*, (Penang: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.), p. 27.



of a *madhhab*, strongly denounce it as a passive approach in practising religion, and a source of error which leads to fanaticism, sectarianism, disunion and weakness within the *ummah*, and is therefore not permissible.<sup>47</sup>

Before examining the detailed positions and arguments of both parties on the issue, it is worthwhile reviewing the historical development of the doctrine of *taqlīd*,<sup>48</sup> as this illustrates the background of their respective points of view. In retrospect, it can be briefly said, that this doctrine emerged at the beginning of the fourth century of the Hijrah after the establishment of the four leading *madhhabs*, i.e. when the basic development of Islamic law had been completed. At this time, Islamic law had been comprehensively delineated in its essential principles, and preserved in the regulations of the law books or legal manuals produced by the *madhhabs*. This situation led many to conclude that *ijtihād* was no longer necessary or desirable. Instead, Muslims were simply to follow and imitate the past law elaborated by the early jurists, i.e. to practise *taqlīd*. Jurists were no longer to seek new solutions or produce new regulations and law books but instead study the established legal manuals and write commentaries on them. Islamic law, the product of a dynamic and creative process, now tended to become fixed and institutionalized.<sup>49</sup> While individual scholars objected, the majority position resulted in traditional belief prohibiting substantive legal development. This is commonly referred to as "the closing of the gate of *ijtihād*." Belief that the work of the *madhhabs* had definitely resulted in the transformation of the *shar'ah* into a legal blueprint for society reinforced the sacrosanct nature of tradition, and change or innovation came to be viewed as

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<sup>47</sup>See for example, Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Kemerdekaan Berfikir Dalam Islam atau Pembasmī Taqlīd* (Penang: Persama Press, 1954), pp. 3 onwards; Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Taqlid dan Kesan-kesannya Terhadap Perkembangan Fikiran dan Ilmu Pengetahuan* (Kuala Pilah: KTF Institut, n.d.), pp. 5-13; Hashim Ghani, *Wajibkah Muslim Bermazhab* (Kuala Pilah: KTF Institut, 1987), pp. 7 onwards.

<sup>48</sup>For detailed account on historical development of *taqlīd*, see for example, al-Shawkānī, *al-Qawl al-Mufīd fī Adillat al-Ijtihād wa al-Taqlīd* (Egypt: Maṭba'at al-Mufāhid, 1340H), pp. 108-120; Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Tārīkh al-Madhāhib al-Islāmiyyah fī Siyāsah wa al-'Aqā'id wa Tārīkh al-Madhāhib al-Fiqhiyyah* (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-'Arabī, n.d.), pp. 255 onwards; Kemal A. Faruki, *Islamic Jurisprudence* (Karachi: Pakistan Publishing House, 1962), in chapter 12: "Ijtihād and Taqlīd," pp. 88-89.

<sup>49</sup>Muḥammad Abū Zahrah, *Tārīkh al-Madhāhib*, op.cit., p. 267; N. J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law* (Edinburgh: The Edinburgh University Press, 1964), p. 80.

unwarranted deviation from established sacred norms.<sup>50</sup>

It was from such circumstances that the doctrine of *taqlīd* grew and became rooted in the Muslim community. In Malaysia, the doctrine of *taqlīd* is said to have flourished in traditional Malay Muslim society as it was preserved by the *pondok*'s traditional education system which, in the teaching of *fiqh*, emphasized a strict, unquestioned and exclusive adherence to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*.<sup>51</sup> The traditionalists believe, as observed by Federspiel, that the human mind is generally incapable of grasping the patterns and intricacies of God's command without reliable guides. The founders of the great *madhhabs*, according to them, had honestly investigated, examined, compiled and explained those patterns and intricacies, and eventually provided a reliable guide, which thus needs no alteration.<sup>52</sup> They perceive that the truths expressed in the teaching of the great Muslim scholars of classical and medieval Islam, including the four major *madhhabs*, did not change. Those truths, according to the traditionalists, did not ever need to be brought to trial since they were never altered by the change of time and conditions, and were as valid in the twentieth century as when they were formulated. A reexamination of the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet was not only unnecessary, but also dangerous since it could lead to misinterpretation and error.<sup>53</sup>

This standpoint is criticized by the reformists, as for them, the doctrine of *taqlīd* confines Muslims to relying on the classical and medieval interpretations of Islam which are not applicable to modern problems confronting Muslims. Instead, they encourage the exercise of *ijtihād* in order to produce fresh interpretations of Islam to demonstrate its relevance and validity for modern life. Inheriting the ideologies of

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<sup>50</sup>See John L. Esposito, *Islam the Straight Path* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, expanded edition, 1994), pp. 84-85.

<sup>51</sup>Howard M. Federspiel, "Persatuan Islam: Islamic Reform in Twentieth Century Indonesia," in *Monograph Series-Modern Indonesia Project, Southeast Asian Program*, (Ithaca: Cornell University, 1970), p. 46; Rahimin Affandi Abd. Rahman, "Budaya Taqlid di dalam Masyarakat Melayu: Satu Tinjauan Ringkas," in *Jurnal Syariah*, vol. 3, no. 3, 1995, pp. 55-56.

<sup>52</sup>Howard M. Federspiel, "Persatuan Islam," op.cit., p. 48.

<sup>53</sup>Ibid., p. 46.

previous reformists such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā, the Malay reformists emphasize the call for the reopening of the gates of *ijtihād*, as they discern that the rulings of the previous jurists were open to correction in light of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah. They maintain that the nature of interpretation itself was susceptible to error because of human limitations or because new evidence might arise. This does mean their total rejection of rulings formulated in the classical and medieval period of Islam; rather, as they frequently stress, such rulings should be used as an aid in deriving new rulings in accordance with contemporary situations. They also dismiss the belief that the interpretations of a *mujtahid* are binding on Muslims individually or collectively, and warn that the standpoints of a *madhhab* must not be elevated so highly as to reach the rank of religion itself.<sup>54</sup>

For the sake of clarity, it is useful to highlight the conflict of the two parties on the issue of *taqlīd* in two aspects: the first aspect concerns the question of the permissibility of *taqlīd*; and the second aspect pertains to the issue of a *muqallid* being bound to follow a specific *madhhab*. These two aspects will be discussed in the following sections below:

### The Permissibility of *Taqlīd*

With regard to this question, the reformists' standpoint is negative, while the traditionalists' stance is affirmative. For the traditionalists, *taqlīd* of a *madhhab* is not only permissible, but is obligatory for common people who do not have the ability to acquire knowledge of the rulings of the Sharīʿah by themselves.<sup>55</sup> This standpoint is based on several Qurʾānic texts, such as, for instance, "Ask the people of remembrance if you do not know" (16: 43). The "people of remembrance (*ahl al-dhikr*)" in this verse are, according to the commentators of the Qurʾān, the people of

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<sup>54</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlīd*, op.cit., pp. 54-57;

<sup>55</sup>Daud Fatani, *Fath al-Mannān*, op.cit., p. 41.

knowledge (*ahl al-ʿilm*). This verse denotes that less well-informed Muslims should have recourse to qualified experts. In another verse, the Muslims are enjoined to establish and maintain a group of specialists who can provide authoritative guidance for non-specialists: "... Nor should the believers all go forth together. If a contingent from every expedition went forth they could devote themselves to studies in religion and admonish the people when they return to them so that they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil)" (9: 122). In 4: 83, the Qur'ān says: "If they had referred to the Messenger and to those of authority among them, then those of them whose task is to find it out would have known the matter." In this verse, the phrase "those of them whose task is to find it out" (*alladhīna yastanbiṭūna-hu min-hum*), refers to those who possess the capacity to draw inferences directly from the evidence, which is called in Arabic *istinbāṭ*. These verses, according to the traditionalists, oblige a Muslim who is not at the level of *istinbāṭ*, i.e. who is not capable of deriving rulings from the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet, even if he is a scholar, to ask and follow someone in such rulings who is at this level.<sup>56</sup>

The traditionalists maintain that even if it is recommended for a *muqallid* to learn as much as he is able of the formal proofs of the *madhhab*, not every Muslim can be a scholar, as scholarship takes a great deal of time, and for the *ummah* to function properly most people must develop other realms of expertise. If every Muslim were personally responsible for evaluating all the primary texts, for which a lifetime study would hardly be enough, he would either have to give up earning a living or give up his religion. Given the depth of scholarship needed to understand the revealed texts accurately, and the extreme warnings given against distorting the revelation, it is obvious to the traditionalists that ordinary Muslims are duty bound to follow expert opinion rather than rely on their own limited reasoning and knowledge.<sup>57</sup> This is in concordance with the fact that Islam does not call one to burden oneself beyond one's ability, as stated in the Qur'ān: "God does not burden a soul more than it can bear"

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<sup>56</sup>Daud Fatani, *Ward al-Zawāhir*, op.cit., pp. 198-199. ; idem, *Fatḥ al-Mannān*, op.cit., p. 40; Nahmar Jamil, *Bermazhab Haram Dan Sesat?* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Mizan, n.d.), p. 43.

<sup>57</sup>Daud Fatani, *Fatḥ al-Mannān*, op.cit., p. 40; Nahmar Jamil, *Bermazhab Haram Dan Sesat?*, op.cit., p. 43.

(2: 286). This verse indicates that one who is not able to research the evidence and derive rulings from it, must refer to the scholars who are able to do that, in order to remove difficulty and to protect himself from straying with regard to the rulings of God without knowledge.<sup>58</sup>

Furthermore, the traditionalists perceive that *taqlīd* of a *madhhab* is a good practice which is based on a foundation of trust. The *muqallid* simply needs to conform to the *madhhab* without necessarily knowing the reasoning behind all of its rulings because of his trust and confidence in its scholars. This is similar to relationships in modern life which are mostly based upon *taqlīd*, such as relationship between a patient and his doctor, a client and his lawyer, or a company director and his accountant, which are all based on trust. Comparing the science of deriving rulings to that of medicine, they give an example, quoting al-Būṭī,<sup>59</sup> that if one is ill, one does not look for oneself in the medical textbooks for the proper diagnosis and cure, but one would go to a trained medical practitioner. The system of *taqlīd* implies that as long as one does not get the training to become a doctor, he cannot practise medicine. And so it is in the case of Islamic law, which is in reality even more important and potentially hazardous. One would be both foolish and irresponsible to try to look through the sources oneself. Instead, one should recognize that those who have spent their entire lives studying the Qur'ān, the *sunnah* and the principles of law are far less likely to be mistaken than oneself.<sup>60</sup>

The reformists, however, reject the permissibility of *taqlīd* as it is seen to result in more disadvantages than benefits for the Muslim community. For one thing, the definition of *taqlīd* given by the jurists, namely, "adopting a person's saying without knowing its proof," denotes a practice that is not based upon knowledge and reasoning. Passive acceptance of dogmas from religious authorities without searching

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<sup>58</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Sumber Undang-undang Islam dan Pandangan Orientalis* (Petaling Jaya: Pustaka Budaya Ilmu, 1994), pp. 56-57; Nahmar Jamil, *Bermazhab Haram Dan Sesat?*, op.cit., pp. 43.

<sup>59</sup>See Sa'īd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, *al-Lā Madhhabiyyah Akhṭar Biḍ'ah Tuhaddidu al-Sharī'at al-Islāmiyyah* (Damshīq: Maktabat al-Farabī, n. d.), p. 78.

<sup>60</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Sumber Undang-undang Islam*; op.cit., p. 57; Nahmar Jamil, *Bermazhab Haram Dan Sesat?*, op.cit., p. 37.



for proofs and without thinking of the rights of free examination and personal initiative is perceived as contradicting the spirit of Islam which recognizes in reasoning beings the faculty of taking decisions in all conscience, as the Qur'ān states: "And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Verily, hearing, sight, and the heart, of each of those you will be questioned about" (Q: 17: 36). The locking up of the faculty of reasoning is discerned by the reformists as causing negative effects to the *ummah* and driving them to a state of passiveness and sluggishness.<sup>61</sup>

Blind imitation of a *madhhab*, according to the reformists, would not only lead people to prefer the sayings and opinions of men to the text of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, but would further lead them to forget even the authentic sayings of their *imāms* and to prefer the sayings of their later followers without discrimination or research, which could finally lead them to perpetrate *bid'ah*.<sup>62</sup> Originally, the reformists assert, the permissibility of *taqlīd* of a *mujtahid* of a *madhhab* was considered as a *rukḥṣah* (concession) for the common people who were not able to research the evidence and derive rulings from it. However, it later turned to *taqlīd* of the later followers of the *madhhab*, and this has engendered negative effects for the *ummah*. This is because there are some followers of the *madhhab* who modified the original standpoints of the *madhhab* for particular reasons, resulting in late comers among the *muqallids* practising their sayings and eventually neglecting the authentic standpoints of the *mujtahids*.<sup>63</sup>

In the reformists' point of view, most traditionalists' practices such as uttering the intention of the prayers, reciting *dhikr* and *du'ā'* with raised voices after the prayers, reciting certain *dhikrs* and blessings upon the Prophet before the *adhān* or between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, performing the *tahlīl* ceremony, contributing to the reward of the deceased and so forth, can be cited as examples of the negative effects of blind imitation of the Shafi'i *madhhab*. To be more specific, reciting *dhikr* and *du'ā'*

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<sup>61</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlīd*, op.cit., pp. 38-39, 52; Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Taqlid*, op.cit., pp. 16-17.

<sup>62</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlīd*, op.cit., pp. 47-48.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., p. 48. Moenawar Chalil, *Kembali Kepada al-Qur-an dan as-Sunnah*, op.cit., pp. 362, 368-369.



en masse with raised voices after the prayers, for instance, was never prescribed by al-Shafi'i himself, nor by any jurists in this *madhhab*, but was only created by his later followers, and this is believed by his blind followers to be al-Shāfi'i's authentic standpoint which was later confirmed as the practice of the Shāfi'i *madhhab*. This practices, however, contradict the Qur'ānic teaching regarding the *ādāb* of performing *dhikr* and *du'ā'*, as appears in 7:55 and 7:205, which command *dhikr* and *du'ā'* to be performed individually and inaudibly.<sup>64</sup> Thus, the traditionalists' practice of reciting *dhikr* and *du'ā'* en masse with raised voices suggests that they prefer the sayings of men to that of the Qur'ān, which is considered by the reformists as a blameworthy *bid'ah* caused by the severity of their blind imitation of the *madhhab*. Similar considerations apply to the other examples mentioned above, all of which are not acted upon on a basis of knowledge and evidence, but on the basis of the precedents set by their forefathers.<sup>65</sup> The Qur'ān itself implicitly condemns such blind imitation when it denounces mindless submission to the world and the legacies of the forefathers in various places, such as in 2:170: "When it is said to them: 'Follow what God has sent down,' they say: 'Nay! We shall follow what we found our fathers following.' Even though their fathers did not understand anything nor were they guided"; in 43:22: "Nay! They say: 'We found our fathers following a certain way, and we guide ourselves by their footsteps'"; and in 31: 21: "And when it is said to them: 'Follow that which God has sent down.' They say: 'Nay, we shall follow that which we found our fathers (doing).'"

Strengthening their criticism of *taqlīd*, the reformists perceive that the decline of the Muslim *ummah* is partly due to its blind and unquestioned clinging to the past. They maintain that history has recorded that the total reliance on *madhhabs* has resulted in the majority of Muslims becoming negligent and careless about the study of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah, and content with the knowledge that was packaged and handed down to them. Their effort then was only to establish it firmly, defend it

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<sup>64</sup>See the reformists' detailed arguments concerning the issue of reciting the *dhikr* and *du'ā'* together with raised voices in Chapter Four pp. 173-183.

<sup>65</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlīd*, op.cit., pp. 10-11; Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Taqlīd*, op.cit., pp. 58-69.

vigorously, and apply it as best as they were able. As the decline of intellectual development continued, the spirit of dissension is said to have grown stronger and become more widespread. For centuries thereafter, blind imitation became the norm and intellectual thought stagnated, while independent reasoning withered and ignorance became common. This deplorable situation, according to the reformists, did not end there but worsened considerably, as if knowledge had disappeared from the world of Muslims afflicted by intellectual sterility. Within this atmosphere, harmful innovation, perversion, and religious corruption of various kinds flourished.<sup>66</sup> All this left the door wide open for the enemies of Islam to sweep away Islamic civilization and plunder its heartlands, and unfortunately, this did in reality take place when Muslims and their lands were subjugated and colonized by the West. During the era of colonization, the tradition of blind following that was so deeply rooted in the Muslims' minds became even stronger among those who were clinging to their world of traditionalism and rejecting Western influence. Meanwhile, the people who were tempted by the influence of the West turned to blindly following Western ideologies and no longer had full confidence in their religion. Among these people, the long tradition of blind following of the *madhhab* had changed into blind following of the West, whilst the religion was imprisoned simply in certain rituals and ceremonies. This situation continued in the post-colonial era and remains until the present time.<sup>67</sup> From this historical point of view the reformists draw the conclusion that as the nature of *taqlīd* has had harmful effects on the *ummah*, it is therefore not permissible in matters of religion.

### ***Taqlīd and Ittibāʿ***

As *taqlīd* is not permissible in the eyes of the reformists, they propose that those who are incapable of *ijtihād* are to follow the religious authorities with knowledge of their

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<sup>66</sup>Zainal Abidin Zam-zam, "Sunnah, Mazhab dan Perkembangannya," in *Kumpulan Kertas Kerja Ijtimak As-Sunnah Perlis* (Perlis: Persatuan al-Islah Perlis, 1986), pp. 82-86.

<sup>67</sup>Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Taqlid*, op.cit., pp. 75-87.

evidences and proofs, a practice that they term as *ittibāʿ*. *Ittibāʿ*, which is defined as following a person's saying on the basis of clear evidence of its validity,<sup>68</sup> is considered as an active fidelity of the *madhhab* and an attempt to reach authenticity, while *taqlīd* is merely a blind imitation which is regarded, as illustrated by al-Shāffī, "like one who gathers wood in the dark of the night and carries it in a bundle, but is worried that there might be a snake in the bundle that will bite him while he is unaware of it."<sup>69</sup> The attempt to distinguish between *ittibāʿ*, or text-based following, and *taqlīd*, or blind imitation, has been a main characteristic of the reformists' polemics which is found in almost all their major works. Their standpoint on the doctrines of *ittibāʿ* and *taqlīd* mainly refers to the classical writings of Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, Ibn Taymiyyah, Ibn al-Qayyim, al-Suyūṭī and al-Shawkānī, and al-Shāṭibī, as well as the modern writings of Rashid Riḍā.<sup>70</sup>

In their works on this issue, the reformists use the term *ittibāʿ* in their call to return to a pristine Islam to refer to a rigorous following of the Qurʾān and the Sunnah of the Prophet as found in the accepted compendia of Prophetic traditions.<sup>71</sup> In this sense, the reformists emphasize that it is indispensable for every Muslim to make every effort, as hard as he possibly can, to learn, understand and practise the teachings of Islam directly from its original sources, namely, the Qurʾān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. In order to understand the Qurʾān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet, one is required to ask or follow any trustworthy scholars, but one must not

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<sup>68</sup>Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih* (Cairo: Idārat al-Ṭibāʿ at al-Muniriyyah, 1920), p. 117; Al-Suyūṭī, *al-Radd ʿalā man Akhlada llā al-Arḍ* (Cairo: al-Jazāʾir, 1325 H), p. 40; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *lʾlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn* (Cairo: Maktabah al-Ḥalabī, n.d), vol. 2, p. 178; Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islamī*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 1121.

<sup>69</sup>Narrated by al-Bayhaqī as quoted by Ibn Qayyim in *lʾlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 183, 195.

<sup>70</sup>Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, a Cordovan scholar of the 5<sup>th</sup> century of the Hijrah who wrote a lot about the validity of *ittibāʿ* and invalidity of *taqlīd* in his *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm wa Faḍlih*, was perhaps the first person who made a clear attempt to distinguish between the two doctrines. His ideas on this are frequently referred to by the later *salafiyyah* scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah in his *Iqtidāʾ al-Ṣirāt al-Mustaḳīm*, Ibn Qayyim in his *lʾlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn*, Al-Suyūṭī in his *al-Radd ʿalā man Akhlada llā al-Arḍ*, and al-Shawkānī in his *Irshād al-Fuḥūl* and *al-Qawl al-Mufīd fi Adillat al-Ijtihād wa al-Taqlīd*. Rashid Riḍā's writings on *ittibāʿ* and *taqlīd* can be frequently found in his *Tafsīr al-Manār*.

<sup>71</sup>The term *ittibāʿ* is consistently used by the reformists with its antithesis, namely, *ibtidāʿ* or *biḍʿah* to form a famous slogan: "*Ittibāʿ al-sunnah wa ijtināb al-biḍʿah* (following the Sunnah and avoiding the *biḍʿah*)." See for example, Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., passim.

rely upon their sayings without knowing their evidence. The *madhhabs* in the perspective of the reformists are only ways or tools to understanding the proofs of the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet. Thus, following their juristic decisions without knowledge of their evidence, as maintained by al-Shawkānī, is merely ignorance (*jahl*).<sup>72</sup> Indeed, the leaders of the four *madhhabs* themselves criticized and prohibited the practice of following them without knowing the evidence for their views, and none of them ever asked their followers to follow their sayings, but rather to follow the original sources which were the basis of their sayings. Abū Ḥanīfah is quoted as saying: "It is not lawful for anyone to give judgement according to what we say until he knows where we have taken it from." He also said: "It is unlawful for whoever does not know my evidence to give my position as a *fatwā*."<sup>73</sup> Mālik is reported to have said: "The saying of everyone may be taken or rejected, except the companion of this grave," pointing to the grave of the Prophet Muḥammad.<sup>74</sup> Al-Shāfi'ī says in his *al-Risālah*: "It is not permissible for anyone to ever say about anything that is lawful or unlawful except with knowledge."<sup>75</sup> He is also quoted as saying: "If I say something, then compare it to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet. If it agrees with them, accept it; but if it goes against them, reject it and throw my saying against the wall."<sup>76</sup> Aḥmad, when a person asked him about whom he should follow, is reported to have said: "Do not follow me, and do not follow Mālik, nor al-Awzā'ī, nor al-Thawrī, nor others. But take the rulings from where they have taken them."<sup>77</sup> These sayings are discerned by the reformists as clear messages from the leaders of the *madhhabs* of the praiseworthiness of *ittibā'* and the invalidity of *taqlid*.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>72</sup>Al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, op.cit., p. 267.

<sup>73</sup>As quoted in Ibn Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 195.

<sup>74</sup>Ibid.

<sup>75</sup>Al-Shāfi'ī, *al-Risālah* (Beirut: Maktabah al-Ilmiyyah, n.d.) p. 39.

<sup>76</sup>See al-Nawawī, *al-Majmū'* (Cairo: Maṭba'ah al-Imām, n.d.), vol. 1, p. 63; Ibn Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 283.

<sup>77</sup>Ibn Qayyim, *I'lām al-Muwaqqi'īn*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 183.

<sup>78</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., pp. 51-53; Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Taqlid*, op.cit., pp. 30-35; Abu Urwah, *Risalah Usrah* (Kuala Lumpur: Pustaka Salam, 1987), vol. 3, no 3, p. 89.

Nonetheless, the traditionalists are reluctant to believe that such sayings were addressed to ordinary Muslims. For them, such remarks were particularly addressed to the scholars. The leaders of the *madhhabs* trained a number of students who then reached the level of *istinbāṭ*. It was to such students, i.e the scholars of *istinbāṭ*, according to the traditionalists, that the leaders of four *madhhabs* addressed such remarks. If it were unlawful for ordinary Muslims to perform any acts of *ʿibādah* before they had mastered the entire textual corpus of the Qurʾān and thousands of Prophetic traditions, together with all the methodological principles required to weigh the evidence, and harmonise between them, they would either have to give up their professions or give up their religion. The traditionalists further maintain that quoting such words to non-scholars in order to suggest that the leaders of the *madhhabs* thought that it was wrong for ordinary Muslims to accept the work of scholars, is misleading and absurd, particularly in view of the lifework of the leaders of the four *madhhabs* from beginning to end which consisted precisely in discovering the *fiqh* rulings of the religion for ordinary Muslims to follow and benefit from.<sup>79</sup>

As for the necessity of knowing the evidence of the *madhhabs*' standpoint, the traditionalists argue that, according to the practice of the Companions of the Prophet in giving their legal opinion, they did not necessarily mention the evidence for it to the person who asked them. The Prophet used to send the most knowledgeable of the Companions to places whose inhabitants knew nothing more of Islam than its five pillars. The latter would follow the person sent to them in everything he gave his judgement upon, including acts of *ʿibādah*, interpersonal dealings, and all matters concerning the lawful and unlawful. Sometimes such a person would come across a question on which he could find no evidence in the Qurʾān or the Sunnah of the Prophet, and he would use his own personal legal reasoning and provide them an answer in the light of it, and they would follow him therein.<sup>80</sup> Quoting al-Āmidī, they maintain that ordinary people in the time of the Companions and those who immediately followed them used to seek the opinion of *mujtahids* and would follow

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<sup>79</sup>Nahmar Jamil, *Bermazhab Haram Dan Sesat?*, op.cit., pp. 39-40.

<sup>80</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Sumber Undang-undang Islam*, op.cit., p. 56.



them in the rules of Sacred Law. The learned among them would unhesitatingly answer their questions without alluding to evidence, and no one censured them for doing so. Furthermore, the traditionalists emphasize that in view of the fact that the scholars accept evidence from the Qur'ān, the Sunnah, and reason, as complete and inter-substantiative, the ordinary people, or learned people not at the level of *istinbāṭ* and *ijtihād*, should follow qualified *mujtahids* who have a comprehensive grasp of all the evidence. They perceive that a formal legal opinion from a *mujtahid* is in relation to ordinary people just as a proof from the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* is in relation to a *mujtahid*. This is because the Qur'ān, just as it obliges scholars to hold to its evidence and proof, also obliges uninformed persons to adhere to the *ijtihād* and formal legal opinion of scholars.<sup>81</sup>

Rejecting the traditionalists' viewpoint that the Companions used to give legal opinions to the people without mentioning their evidence, the reformists insist that the Prophet's senior Companions in all cases of giving legal opinion showed an emphasis on a search for textual evidence, and not an act of *taqlīd*. This, according to the reformists, is what distinguishes *ittibāṣ* from *taqlīd*: the former is always based on textual evidence, while the latter refers to an opinion that is not corroborated in the same way. Despite their vehement critique of *taqlīd*, some reformists, however, at one point note that *taqlīd* is permissible if it is impossible for one to perform individual religious obligations without practising *taqlīd* of the scholars. Nevertheless, in this case, one is not permitted to depend on *taqlīd* permanently, but is obliged in the interim to search for knowledge and evidence in order to reach the level of *ittibāṣ*.<sup>82</sup> Though this seems a kind of flexibility, it does not lessen their pungent critique on *taqlīd* as propounded consistently in their works.

The issue of *taqlīd* of a *madhhab* is, in fact, a disputed matter among jurists, who in this case can be divided into three groups: the first group, which comprises the

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<sup>81</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Sumber Undang-undang Islam*, op.cit., pp. 56-57; Nahmar Jamil, *Bermazhab Haram Dan Sesat?*, op.cit., p. 39.

<sup>82</sup>Abu Urwah, *Risalah Usrah*, op.cit., vol. 3, no. 3, p. 92.

majority of jurists, approve *taqlīd* and perceive it as obligatory for non-*mujtahids*.<sup>83</sup> The second group in all ways prohibit it for all Muslims. Among the prominent jurists in this group are al-Shawkānī and Ibn Ḥazm.<sup>84</sup> The third group, led by Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr and Ibn al-Qayyim, despite their critique on *taqlīd*, allow ordinary Muslims to practise *taqlīd*, but prohibit them from holding to a specific *madhhab*.<sup>85</sup> The second and third group, however, share a similar perception in their emphasis on the idea of *ittibāʿ*. It seems, therefore, that the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists on this issue is merely a repetition and continuation of a never-ending dispute among previous jurists. The traditionalists in this issue fall into the first group, while the reformists go into the second, or sometimes, the third group. The conflict occurs when the traditionalists perceive *taqlīd* as a simple solution to the complex task of understanding and deriving rulings from the textual evidence, while the reformists consider it as an enormous problem that causes illness in the society.

In addition to their conflicting perspectives as examined above, it can be seen that the dispute on this issue is also due to the problem of some inappropriate perceptions *vis-a-vis* the definition of *taqlīd* itself. The traditionalists' perception that it is obligatory for non-*mujtahids* to practise *taqlīd*, regardless of whether they are scholars (*ʿulamāʾ*) or ordinary Muslims, places the former and the latter at the same level, i.e. the level of *muqallids*. The fact that scholars necessarily have knowledge of the *fiqh* rulings and the evidence for them is apparently irreconcilable with how *taqlīd* is defined, namely, "following the *ijtihāds* of *mujtahids* without knowledge of their evidence." This definition seems to be only applicable to ordinary people, not to the scholars, leaving a part of the traditionalists' perception of *taqlīd* as if in conflict with its definition, which therefore has also been a subject of criticism by the reformists. In order to find a way out of such a conflict, it would be safer, as suggested by some scholars, if the classical definition of *taqlīd* were slightly modified,

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<sup>83</sup>See for example, Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 1127.

<sup>84</sup>See al-Shawkānī, *Irshād al-Fuḥūl*, op.cit., p. 240, passim; Ibn Ḥazm, *al-Iḥkām*, op.cit., vol. 6, pp. 821 onwards.

<sup>85</sup>See Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr, *Jāmiʿ Bayān al-ʿIlm*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 140; Ibn Qayyim, *Iʿlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn*, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 168 onwards.

indicating that knowing the evidence of a *mujtahid* in full, as he himself knows it, is unnecessary. Hence, it could be defined as "following the *ijtihāds* of *mujtahids* without complete knowledge of their evidences,"<sup>86</sup> which seems to be somewhat in accordance with the fact that both ordinary Muslims and scholars do not have complete knowledge of the evidence of the *ijtihāds* they follow.

The reformists who condemn *taqlīd* as it is, seem to be satisfied with their idea of *ittibāʿ* which seems to distinguish the act of following *ijtihāds* when there is knowledge of their evidence from ones which are otherwise. Whilst their denunciation of *taqlīd* is apparently reasonable, their encouragement of *ittibāʿ* seems to be overly ideal and would seem to cause difficulties for ordinary people who are incapable of examining the evidence for the *ijtihāds* of the *madhhabs*. Searching the evidence needs not only a plain knowledge of it, but also an understanding of the methods of *istinbāṭ* used by the *mujtahid* to infer the rulings from the evidence, and this requires one to have mastery of the knowledge relating to it, especially that of the principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*). This means, to practise *ittibāʿ*, an ordinary Muslim has to be a scholar in order to understand the evidence of the *ijtihāds* of the *madhhab*, and it is impossible to force all Muslims to reach this level of scholarship. Taking account of the incapability of ordinary Muslims, who are the majority, to be scholars, they should therefore be allowed to practise *taqlīd*, for the sake of ease and avoiding hardship. As for *mujtahids* and *muftīs*, it is undeniable that mentioning the evidence when giving legal opinions is commendable, as stated by many jurists,<sup>87</sup> for it brings many benefits, but it should not be regarded as an obligation for them. Occasionally, *mujtahids* or *muftīs* will not mention the evidence of their *ijtihāds* or legal opinions due to the complexity of the method of *istinbāṭ* which they think might cause confusion for ordinary people to understand. In this case, it is sufficient for one to trust them without asking them to provide the evidence of their *ijtihād*, which is also beyond the limit of courtesy.

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<sup>86</sup>See for example, ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Taqlīd fī al-Sharʿat al-Islāmiyyah* (Madīnah: Dār al-Bukhārī, 1993), pp. 20-21.

<sup>87</sup>See for example, Ibn al-Qayyim, *ʿIlām al-Muwaqqfīn*, op.cit., vol. 4, pp. 208, 219.

However, regardless of that, with careful scrutiny one finds that there is an overlap between the concepts of *ittibāʿ* and *taqlīd*, as following the *ijtihāds* of a *madhhab* does not mean clinging to the sayings of the *mujtahid* per se, but refers to adopting the rulings that are inferred from the evidence of the Qurʾān and the *sunnah* through the efforts of persons who are qualified to exercise *ijtihād*. Adopting the *ijtihāds* of *mujtahids* for those who are not capable of *ijtihād*, though they do not know the evidence, is therefore an endeavour to follow the Qurʾān and the Sunnah, i.e. an act of *ittibāʿ*. In this perspective, the *mujtahids* and the *muqallids* are considered as the followers of the Qurʾān and the *sunnah* (*muttabiʿs*), but in terms of the terminology, their acts of following are distinguished by different terms, viz. *ijtihād* for those who are able to exercise *ijtihād*, and *taqlīd* for those who are not able to perform *ijtihād*. *Taqlīd* of a *madhhab*, however, demands following the authentic standpoint of the *madhhab*, and not simply the following those which are customarily practised by their forefathers without distinguishing the original practices of the *madhhab* from the additional ones which are perhaps not based on any valid proofs. Thus, *muqallids*, especially ordinary people, should make every effort they possibly can to reach the authentic standpoints of the *madhhab*, and steer clear of adopting any practices which might be only derived from custom.

### Holding to a Specific *Madhhab*

The Malay Muslims are known as loyal adherents of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. They are believed to have been practising Islam according to this *madhhab* as early as the advent of Islam to the Malay Archipelago. At that time, the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* occupied an important position in this region as it was spread by Muslim missionaries who were of this *madhhab*. Thereafter, the influence of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* in Malay society has been reinforced through the teaching of *fiqh* in the traditional education system as well as through the Islamic legal system which refers specifically to this *madhhab*.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>88</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Pengaruh Madhhab Shafi'i dan Masalah Kaum Muda di Malaysia* (Bangi: Persatuan Bekas Pelajar Timur Tengah, 1981), p. 3.

The Shāfiʿī *madhhab* has thus generally become an official *madhhab* for the Malays, and it is not extreme to say that the Malay Muslims are the fanatics of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*.<sup>89</sup> At the present time, the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* is approved as the official *madhhab* of every state in Malaysia except the state of Perlis which does not bind itself to any specific *fiqh madhhab*.<sup>90</sup>

Theoretically, the traditionalists believe that in practising the religion, one is not obliged to adhere to a specific *madhhab*. One can follow any other *madhhab*, i.e. practise *talfīq*,<sup>91</sup> in certain practices as long as one does not have the intention of following only the easiest ways mixed from the various *madhhabs* (*tatabbuʿ rukhaṣ al-madhāhib*).<sup>92</sup> In the Malaysian Islamic legal system, though Islamic law is principally based on the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, the doctrine of *talfīq* is used occasionally.<sup>93</sup> Some traditionalists acknowledge that practising *talfīq* is better than absolute *taqlīd* to a specific *madhhab*. However, they hold that practising *talfīq* must not be seen as an

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<sup>89</sup>Abdullah Ishak, *Islam Di Nusantara* (Kuala Lumpur: BAHEIS, JPM, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1992), p. 192.

<sup>90</sup>*Undang-undang Tubuh Kerajaan Perlis*, 1974 (Amended), 5 (1) states that the religion of the state is Islam of *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah*, with no mention of being bound to any *madhhab*. Sect. 7 (4) of the Perlis Law of Administration of Islamic Affairs, 1963, allocates that the *Majlis* (Council of Islamic Affairs) and the Committee of *Sharʿah*, in giving the *fatwa* or opinion, must refer to the *Qurʾān* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. None of the laws mention that the state follows any specific *fiqh madhhab*. In its *fatwā* dated 18 April 1988, the Perlis Council of Islamic Affairs, in defining the term *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah* clearly states that it is not bound to any specific *fiqh madhhab*. See "Definasi *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*," in *Keputusan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Sharʿiyyah Negeri Perlis*, 18 April 1988.

<sup>91</sup>The jurists define *talfīq* as combining two or more standpoints of the *madhhabs* in a particular action. See Muḥammad Saʿīd al-Bānī, *ʿUmdat al-Taḥqīq fī al-Taqlīd wa al-Talfīq*, (Damshīq: Maktabat Ḥukūmah, 1923), p. 91; Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Uṣūl al-Fiqh al-Islāmī*, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 1142. Schacht defines *talfīq* as "combining the doctrines of more than one school." See J. Schacht, *An Introduction to Islamic Law* (Oxford: Oxford U. Press, 1964), p. 303. While Coulson defines it as: "The process in legal modernism of 'patching together' or combining view of different schools and jurists or elements therefrom, to form a single legal rule." See N. J. Coulson, *A History of Islamic Law*, op.cit., p. 240. In short, *talfīq* is a process of seeking rulings outside the boundaries of a single *madhhab*.

<sup>92</sup>Daud Fatani, *Furūʿ al-Masāʾil*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 14. However, the traditionalists perceive that in performing certain acts of *ʿibādah*, one is obliged to follow a specific *madhhab*. *Taqlīd* to two *madhhabs* in one action is prohibited and it nullifies the act of *ʿibādah*. For example, if one wipes a part of his head in performing ablution following the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, one is not permitted to hold that touching women's skin would not nullify the ablution following the Mālikī *madhhab*. This is because touching women's skin according to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* nullifies the ablution, while the Mālikī *madhhab* do not recognize wiping a part of head in performing ablution. See Daud Fatani, *Fatḥ al-Mannān*, op.cit., p. 42. See also other examples in idem, *Furūʿ al-Masāʾil*, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 14.

<sup>93</sup>On this subject, see Othman Ishak, "Talfiq Dalam Perundangan Islam," in *ISLAMIKA* (Kuala Lumpur: Muzium Negara, 1985), vol. iii, pp. 95-98.



attempt to eliminate *madhhabism*, but should be seen as an effort of reinforcement of any standpoints which are adaptable and in accordance with contemporary circumstances.<sup>94</sup> They even hold that it is not wrong for those who are able to analyse and evaluate the standpoints of the *madhhabs* to choose the ones that appear to them as the strongest and the most convincing standpoints. For ordinary people, the traditionalists maintain, it is safer to bind themselves to a specific *madhhab*. This does not mean that they are duty-bound to hold to that *madhhab*, but they are permitted to practise *talfiq* in certain circumstances.<sup>95</sup>

This viewpoint, however, seems to be adopted only by small group of scholars among them, while the great majority of the traditionalists strongly defend the loyalty to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, and consider changing to any other *madhhab* as heresy. This attitude is entrenched in the milieu where they are taught to adhere strictly to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. The teaching of *fiqh*, whether in the traditional or modern education system,<sup>96</sup> is only confined to the texts of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* whether in the Malay language, such as Daud Fatani's *Bughyat al-Ṭullāb* and *Furūʿ al-Masā'il*, Muhammad Arshad Banjari's *Sabīl al-Muhtadīn* and Muhammad b. Ismail Daud Fatani's *Maṭlaʿ al-Badrayn*, or in Arabic such as al-Nawawī's *Minhāj al-Ṭālibīn* and al-Malbarī's *Fath al-Muʿīn*. It has no disclosure of rulings of the *madhhabs* other than the Shāfiʿī, and thus, it is not surprising that the rulings of the other *madhhabs*, if they differ from the Shāfiʿī view, are deemed by the traditionalists as strange and unacceptable. For them, once one has been a follower of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, holding fast to it is a lifetime must, while turning to another *madhhab* might be considered as a betrayal of the *madhhab*.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>See Othman Ishak, "Talfiq Dalam Perundangan Islam," op.cit., p. 98.

<sup>95</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Perbezaan Aliran Mazhab Fiqh: Perkembangan dan Masalah* (Kuala Lumpur: ABIM, 1986), pp. 46-50; *idem*, *Sumber Undang-undang Islam*, op.cit., p. 59.

<sup>96</sup>With the exception of the higher level of education, such as the Islamic Law subject taught for students of Islamic Studies in the local universities.

<sup>97</sup>Mohd. Radzi Othman & O.K. Rahmat Dato' Baharuddin, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam Di Negeri Perlis dan Kaitannya dengan gerakan Pembaharuan Islam di Negeri-negeri Lain di Malaysia* (Penang: USM, 1991), pp. 223-224.

Whilst adherence to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* is strongly conserved, any influences of the other *madhhabs* seem to be disliked by the traditionalists and should even be banned. In a recent development, for example, the Islamic Affairs Department of Johore state has warned that it will act against "the followers of Wahhābī" who are claimed as having deviated from the original teachings of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah, and called Muslim society to hold firmly to the teachings of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* and reject the other *madhhabs*' teachings.<sup>98</sup> This attitude indicates not only an effort to preserve the establishment of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* in the Malay Muslim community, but also their resistance to accept the influences of any other *madhhabs*. The traditionalists believe that holding to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* is a sacrosanct tradition that will preserve unity and stability among the Malay Muslims, while adopting the teachings of other *madhhabs* will confuse them and affect the solidarity of the community.<sup>99</sup> Moreover, the traditionalists feel that the status of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* as the official *madhhab* of the states should be seriously protected.<sup>100</sup> On these reasons, the religious authorities have made every effort to preserve the influence of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, resulting in the teachings of other *madhhabs* having no place in the Malay Muslim community, except amongst the reformists.

It is such longstanding attitudes that are severely criticized by the reformists. The reformists believe that a Muslim is not obliged, neither by the primary textual evidence nor by the leaders of the *madhhabs* themselves, to bind himself to any specific *fiqh madhhab*.<sup>101</sup> Contrary to the traditionalists' claim that adopting teachings of more than one *madhhab* causes confusion and disunity in the society, the reformists believe that it is the act of binding oneself to a specific *madhhab* which would engender confusion and disunity.<sup>102</sup> The reformists maintain that holding to a

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<sup>98</sup>See reports in *Berita Harian*, 11 August 1998 and 21 August 1998.

<sup>99</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Perbezaan Aliran Mazhab Fiqh*, op.cit., p. 45.

<sup>100</sup>Mohd. Radzi Othman & O.K. Rahmat, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam*, op.cit., pp. 274, 278, 355.

<sup>101</sup>Hashim Ghani, *Gelanggang Soal Jawab*, op.cit., pp. 102-104; Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., p. 69.

<sup>102</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., p. 60.

particular *madhhab*, according to the position of the great majority of scholars, is not obligatory, since it is never prescribed in the Qur'ān or the Sunnah. The reformists emphasize that it is only God and His Messenger who are to be obeyed by everyone in every condition, and thus, making it obligatory for a Muslim to hold and obey to a particular *madhhab* would cause confusion about to whom the obedience should be given. In this case they quote Ibn Taymiyyah's saying: "He who makes it obligatory to blindly follow a particular *imām*, should be asked to repent. And if he does not repent, he must be killed, for this is associating partners with God in setting down the Shari'ah, which is only of His right."<sup>103</sup> The reformists perceive that the purpose of following the *ijtihād* of the *madhhabs* is to guide a Muslim to understand and practice the rulings of God. On this ground, a Muslim who is incapable of practising *ijtihād* should be free to consult and follow any *madhhab* or trustworthy scholar as he wishes, just as a man who is ill consults the physician whom he prefers.<sup>104</sup>

Furthermore, the reformists maintain that holding to a specific *madhhab* would cause fanaticism of the *madhhab* (*al-ta'assub al-madhhabī*) among its followers which would then disunite the Muslim community. It is undeniable that the Muslim community for centuries has been experiencing a chronic problem of fanaticism of the *madhhabs* which results in not only dispute and distrust, but also hatred and rampant discord among their followers.<sup>105</sup> The belief that the truth is only in their respective *madhhab* has strengthened the fanaticism, and there is no other way, the reformists feel, to eliminate this problem except by freeing Muslims from being bound to a single specific *madhhab*.<sup>106</sup> The reformists make clear that they do not confine themselves to any single *madhhab* that prevails in the Muslim world nowadays, for they believe that the truth is not confined to any single *madhhab*. The best generations had passed by without binding themselves to follow any specific *madhhab*. Also, the leaders of the

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<sup>103</sup>As quoted in Hashim Ghani, *Apakah Muslim Wajib Bermazhab?* (Kuala Pilah: KTF Institut, 1983), p. 25.

<sup>104</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., p. 120. See also Hashim Ghani, *Apakah Muslim Wajib Bermazhab?*, op.cit., p. 37.

<sup>105</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., p. 57.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid., pp. 110-112.

respective *madhhabs* made no claim of being infallible, as they simply strove to arrive at the truth; if they made some errors, they were nonetheless promised a reward, and if they were correct in their endeavors, they were entitled to a double reward as indicated in various *ḥadīths*.<sup>107</sup>

In their efforts to free Malay Muslims from being shackled to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, the reformists have been consistently promulgating the idea of borderless *fiqh*, an eclectic approach which was strenuously maintained by the previous reformists, and as that is intensively promoted by Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, for example, in the present day. Just as the *talfīḥ*, the concept of borderless *fiqh* refers to adopting the rulings of *fiqh* from not a single *madhhab* but from all the four prominent *madhhabs* through the process *tarjīḥ*, i.e. by choosing the ones which are considered as based on the strongest evidence.<sup>108</sup> This concept is brought by the reformists along with their emphasis on learning Islamic law alongside the proofs thereto from the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, *ijmāʿ*, *qiyās* and so forth. For them, this gives an authentic picture of Islamic *fiqh* brought by the Prophet Muḥammad, and opens the doors of understanding to all Muslims. This approach is also believed to be a way to unite Muslims and to avoid the conflicts and fanaticism due to *madhhab* allegiance.<sup>109</sup>

In this sense, the reformists who dismiss the traditionalists' dependency on only the Shāfiʿī's "yellow" books of *fiqh*, have instead propounded an eclecticism in adopting rulings of *fiqh* and an emphasis on a method of comparative *tarjīḥ* in the teaching of *fiqh*.<sup>110</sup> In addition to the wide range of books of *fiqh* of the four *madhhabs*, comparative *fiqh* books such as Ibn Rushd's *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid* and al-Shawkānī's *Nayl al-Awṭār* among the classical works, and Sayyid Sābiq's *Fiqh al-*

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<sup>107</sup>Ibid., pp. 54, 70-71.

<sup>108</sup>The process of *tarjīḥ*, according to the reformists, should be accomplished by the jurist or scholar, not by the ordinary people. The ordinary people are to follow what has been chosen by the jurists. See Abu 'Urwah, *Risalah Usrah*, op.cit., vol. 3, no. 3, p. 95. See also, Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., pp. 59-60.

<sup>109</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., pp. 67-72. See also, Mohd. Radzi Othman & O.K. Rahmat Dato' Baharuddin, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam*, op.cit., pp. 197-198.

<sup>110</sup>Abu Bakar Ashaari, *Pembasmi Taqlid*, op.cit., pp. 59-60.

*Sunnah* and Wahbah al-Zuhayli's *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh* among modern works exegeses, are profoundly essential and popular among them. The reformists regard these works as have followed the jurisprudential methodology that is best described as *salafī*, which examines the opinions of all four *madhhabs* in the light of primary textual evidence and then selects therefrom the ones that are closest to the evidence.<sup>111</sup>

Concluding this issue, it is worth noting that according to the viewpoint of the majority of jurists, holding to a single *madhhab* is not obligatory, unless it is politically made obligatory by the leader of the Muslim state. In that case, all Muslims in the state are obliged to obey the law according to rulings of the *madhhab* chosen by their leader, except in their personal practices that are not specified by the law.<sup>112</sup> In the Malaysian context, although the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* is held as the official *madhhab* of almost all states, to some extent as previously mentioned, the other *madhhabs* are permitted to be practised. In short, Islamic law in Malaysia does not confine itself only to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, but opens the door to other *madhhabs* in certain circumstances. The position of some scholars among the traditionalists seems to be in accordance with the reformists' standpoint, but the attitude of the great majority of traditionalists in resisting the adoption of the rulings of other *madhhabs* results in their conflict remaining unresolved. The traditionalists' protective attitude is in fact due to their confidence in practising a single *madhhab* which happens to be the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*. They hold that something which has been established and stabilized in the society does not need to be changed but should be defended. The traditionalists believe in stability and they are very resistant to change. The reformists, however, believe that Muslims must return to a pristine Islam, and the process of cleaning and reform must go on, even if this task is painful. These two opposing attitudes have thus been a major source of conflict between the two parties.

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<sup>111</sup>Mohd. Radzi Othman & O.K. Rahmat, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam* op.cit., pp. 60-62.

<sup>112</sup>See 'Abd Allāh al-Shinqīṭī, *al-Taqlīd fī al-Shar'at al-Islāmiyyah*, op.cit., p. 146. See also, Amin Ahsan Islahī, *Juristic Differences*, op.cit., p. 64.



## Lack of Tolerance over Disputed Matters

Disputes and disagreements concerning the branches (*furūʿ*) of the religion, particularly in juristic matters are considered a normal phenomenon among Muslims. Without exception, the Malay traditionalists and reformists are involved in this typical phenomenon, disputing over abstruse points of *fiqh* and other matters which are not part of the fundamental principles of Islam. Unfortunately, because of the lack of tolerance, their disputes frequently exceed the limits, resulting in longlasting conflict between the two factions. In defending their respective standpoints, both parties not only insist that their viewpoint is the only true one and criticize the others' as wrong, but also demonstrate a non-compromising attitude and ignore the vitality of Islamic brotherhood and the unity of the Muslim *ummah*. The claims to exclusivity and superiority, in which their own opinions are regarded as a priority better than others, easily slip into fanaticism. Academic debates on disputed matters often turn to futile polemics, quarrels, dissensions and condemnations of each other, and thus cause hard feelings and even hostility among them. These obviously contradict the spirit of Islam and create a negative impact on the *ummah*.

To some extent, disagreements and disputes are allowed in Islam, as part of acknowledging the natural differences between human beings, such as in their mental capabilities, perceptions, thought, races, languages and cultures.<sup>113</sup> All this naturally gives rise to a multiplicity and variety of viewpoints and judgements. Differences and disagreement are thus regarded as part of the nature of life, as hinted at in the Qur'ān: "And if your Lord had so willed, He would have made mankind one *ummah*, but they will not to cease to differ, except those on whom your Lord has bestowed His mercy, and for this did He create them." (11: 118-119). Provided that differences do not exceed the limits and remain within the standard norms of ethics and proper behaviour, this phenomenon is acceptable and could even be beneficial for the *ummah*. Nevertheless, disagreements that lead to hostility and schism, splitting up the

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<sup>113</sup>Ṭāhā Jābir al-ʿAlwānī, *The Ethics of Disagreement*, op.cit., pp. 17-18.

*ummah*, are not permitted in Islam, as stated frequently in the Qur'ān, such as in 3: 103: "And hold fast, all of you together, to the Rope of God and be not divided among yourselves"; and in 8: 46: "And do not dispute with one another lest you fail and your strength desert you."

The disagreements of earlier scholars over juristic matters, for example, are acceptable, as their disagreements were about subsidiary issues, and were managed in a healthy framework and with proper ethics.<sup>114</sup> Their disagreements were treated as differences of opinion and not reasons for estrangement and schism. Juristic disagreements between them were not allowed to go beyond the academic domain or to cause hatred and enmity, and never led them to lose sight of the major issues and the higher purposes of the *shar'ah*. Besides, the jurists have demonstrated a great tolerance in managing disagreements among them. Differences of opinion among early jurists were in fact, to begin with, a source of blessing which helped to develop Islamic jurisprudence, establish the relevance of Islam to changing circumstances, and safeguard public welfare.<sup>115</sup> However, later, differences of opinion became one of the most critical and dangerous factors contributing to disunity and internecine strife among Muslims. In this context, dispute between the traditionalists and the reformists, without denying its positive effects, is considered as one that has had a bad impact on the *ummah*. Their disputes, which mostly resemble previous juristic differences, are not apparently dealt with in the proper way, which thus, results in conflicts and schisms, and become elements of destruction in the *ummah*. The traditionalists and the reformists, both of them seem to have a serious lack of tolerance in experiencing opposing positions to each other. Some examples will illustrate this situation.

The antagonism between the traditionalists and the reformists over disputed matters usually exceeds its limits and goes so far as to label the opposite party as heretics, misguided, *fāsiqs* and even disbelievers. This chronic phenomenon regularly

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid., p. 18.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., p. 104.

happens among the ordinary people of the both parties who lack knowledge, but occasionally involves also their scholars. For example, the former Mufti of Johore (from 1934 until 1961), Saiyid Alwi b. Tahir al-Haddad, who was a great opponent of reformism, had in his *fatwā* equated the *Kaum Muda* reformists with the Khawārij and heretics (*ahl al-bid'ah*), and claimed that many of them became apostates and disbelievers resembling the Qādiyānī.<sup>116</sup> Among the reasons for his claim were that the *Kaum Muda*, who were according to him, a group who lacked knowledge of Islam, tried to follow the teachings of other religions such as those of Christianity and the Mājūsīs; and they also paid too much attention to the controversial matters and exaggerated them, and treated those who opposed their opinions in these matters as enemies. He also made the claim that the *Kaum Muda* had blamed and treated with contempt the leaders of the four *madhhabs* and other scholars, and pretended themselves to be the followers of the true Islam. They had caused serious damage to the teachings of Islam from within and disunited the solidarity of the Malay Muslim *ummah*.<sup>117</sup> Regardless of the truth of this allegation, claiming that the *Kaum Muda* resembled groups who had deviated from Islam seemed to be somewhat excessive as his opposing standpoints towards the *Kaum Muda* only involved the branches of Islam and points of *fiqh*, as referred to in his *fatwā*.<sup>118</sup> However, as there is no tolerance, differences of opinion in such matters have been a cause of making heavy accusations to the opposing party.

The traditionalists' attitude nowadays seems to be not much different from the past. This attitude, however, is possibly their offensive reactions towards the reformists' aggressive campaigns which are believed to have harmed their established

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<sup>116</sup>See Jabatan Agama Islam Johor, *Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor yang difatwakan oleh Dato' Saiyid Alwi b. Tahir al-Haddad 1936-1961* (Johor Baharu: Jabatan Agama Islam Johor, 1990), vol. 3, pp. 61-62, 165. The term Qādiyānī, as suggested by W. R. Roff, was used by those who were hostile to the forces of modernism and reformism as a vituperative term implying heresy. See W. R. Roff, *The Origins*, fn 80, p. 80.

<sup>117</sup>Jabatan Agama Islam Johor, *Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 163.

<sup>118</sup>In his *fatwā*, Alwi referred to several issues of *fiqh* which are disputed among the jurists, such as the uncleanness of pigs, *rujū'* without the consent of a wife, touching the Qur'ān without ablution, touching a woman's skin etc. Nonetheless, he made strange conclusion and accusation to the *Kaum Muda* who differed with him in such issues, as if he was unaware of the jurists' differences of opinion in these matters, or as if no differences of opinion are allowed in such matters. See his detailed *fatwā* in Jabatan Agama Islam Johor, *Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Johor*, op.cit., vol. 3, pp. 162-165.

norms and status quo. Some of the reformists, no different in the past or present days, frequently take harsh and confronting approaches in their call to Malay Muslims to return to the original Islam. This might be due to their reluctance to acknowledge many issues, particularly those which they consider to relate to matters of *bid'ah*, as being disputed matters (*masā'il khilāfiyyah*). In this regard, the reformists seem to confine disputed matters to a limited definition. To them, disputed matters are those which have a basis in the primary textual evidence but about which jurists have differed in their interpretations to infer rulings from the evidence. Matters that have no basis in the primary textual evidence, such as uttering the intention of prayer or other acts of *'ibādah*, chanting certain *dhikrs* and blessing upon the Prophet between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers, reciting the Qur'ān on the grave etc, as intensively practised by the traditionalists, according to the reformists, are not disputed matters, but matters of *bid'ah*. Disputed matters for them are tolerable, but matters of *bid'ah* are intolerable in Islam and must be eradicated by all means.<sup>119</sup>

As eradicating *bid'ah* is held as a part of the reformists' important message to all Malay Muslims, confrontation with the traditionalists who they believe to practise *bid'ah*, is unavoidable. The reformists believe that *bid'ah* is intolerable in the religion and thus, those who involve themselves in such matters should be given hard warnings.<sup>120</sup> From this standpoint, hard words and bad terms are necessarily used by some reformists in opposing and attacking the traditionalists' practices, which, according to them, are against the teachings of Islam. Some reformist writers, such as Hashim Ghani,<sup>121</sup> tend to use a somewhat extreme language in propagating their ideas as if to force others to accept their viewpoint. By this approach, the reformists might want to show their firmness and steadfastness in efforts to purify the society from elements that against Islamic teachings. For them, the truth must be said even

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<sup>119</sup>Basri Ibrahim, *Khilāfiyyah, Bid'ah & Masalah Umum*, op.cit., p. 291, Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Masalah Khilāfiyyah* (Perlis: Persatuan al-Islah Perlis, n.d), pp. 4-5,

<sup>120</sup>See Ahmad Yusuf Amin, *Bid'ah*, op.cit., p. 112.

<sup>121</sup>In case of Hashim Ghani, a leader of the the group Ittiba' al-Sunnah i.e a reformist group in Negeri Sembilan, his book regarding *taqlīd* and *madhhab* entitled *Gayung Bersambut Ke-2 As-Sunnah Membela Diri*, has been severely criticized by the traditionalists for its rude language, and finally banned by the Pusat Islam who classified it as a deviated teaching.



if it is risky. However, they forget to take the sensitivities of society into account, as a harsh attitude in promulgating their ideas of reform is unacceptable to many people. Moreover, this attitude is also denounced by Islam itself as hinted at in the Qur'ān: "And by the mercy of God you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you." (3:159). The traditionalists, in defending themselves, have no choice but to counter-attack the reformists and sometimes, worse than that, they also accuse some previous great scholars emulated by the reformists, such as Ibn Taymiyyah, Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Muḥammad ʿAbduh as having deviated from original Islamic teachings.<sup>122</sup>

In a community where the traditionalists and the reformists are intolerant to each other, arguing, quarrelling, bickering over the matters of *khilāfiyyah* are apparently common, and this frequently leads to fragmentation of their unity. Arguments over the juristic matters usually end in hard feelings and hatred which then split up Islamic brotherhood and even family relationships.<sup>123</sup> As a result, in some areas, for example, especially at the village level, both parties avoid praying together congregation but pray in seclusion in their own respective mosques or *suraus*. For many reformists, praying behind the traditionalists makes them feel dissatisfied, as if their prayers are incomplete, for they are praying behind someone who they believe is committing *bidʿah* in prayer, by pronouncing the intention of prayer, reciting the *basmalah* audibly etc. The traditionalists also have similar feelings if they pray behind a reformist, but with a different reason, i.e. that they are praying behind someone whose prayer, according to their view, is incompletely performed, because some

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<sup>122</sup>For example, Ibn Taymiyyah is severely accused by K. H. Sirajuddin Abbas as one who was from the deviated groups of Mujassimah and Mushabbihah, and he was not from the group of Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamāʿah. See K. H. Sirajuddin Abbas, *I'tiqad Ahlul-Sunnah Wal-Jama'ah* (Kelantan: Pustaka Aman Press, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 1978), pp. 262-269. In this book (pp 399-302), he also places Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and Wahhabism in deviated groups. Mustaffa Suhaimi in his *Salah Faham Terhadap Bidaah dan Syirik* (Selangor: Progresive Publishing House Sdn. Bhd, 1994) also shows strong criticism on Ibn Taymiyyah and Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Wahhāb and their followers, and suggests that they were ignorant (*jāhil*) scholars (pp. 218-219).

<sup>123</sup>It is regularly happens to the family sending their children to study Islam in the Middle East, particularly in Saudi Arabia, that when they come back with the reform ideas to their family who are traditionalists, confrontation happens and breaks the family ties. In one case of the researcher's experience, one challenged his father to debate over certain disputed matters, and in another case, one burnt his late father's collection of traditional Malay *fiqh* books, because of his hatred of Islamic traditionalism.



"important parts" of it are left out, such as *qunūt* in the Fajr prayer and and chanting *dhikr* and *du'ā'* audibly altogether after the prayer. Some reformists, if they inadvertently pray behind a traditionalist, would prefer to separate themselves from the *imām* (*mufāraqah*), or sometimes, if they keep following the *imām* dissatisfiedly, would repeat their prayer.<sup>124</sup>

The conflict between the two factions in religious practices also extends to social relationships. Because of intolerance over disputed matters, most traditionalists and reformists, especially in rural society, appear to be in an antagonistic relationship towards each other. Boycotting the opposite party, for example in feasts, has become a common phenomenon in many areas. To most reformists, the traditionalists' feasts, particularly the feast of the deceased, which they consider as pure *bid'ah*, or *aqīqah* and wedding feasts which are mixed up with the elements of *bid'ah*, such as chanting *marḥaban* and *berzanji*, should be boycotted in order to avoid their involvement in *bid'ah*, and as a sign of their objection to widespread *bid'ah* in the society. Moreover, some reformists, probably the extreme ones, regard the traditionalists as the heretics (*ahl al-bid'ah*) who should be treated as who they are, without considering the degree of the *bid'ah* they practise. For them, heretics should not be befriended or associated with. Their slaughtered meat should not be eaten, and they should not even be greeted. They should be boycotted all the way as a punishment and lesson for them to learn from.<sup>125</sup> In return, the traditionalists also take similar action, boycotting the reformists as they are considered as a menace to the established norms of life, stirring up the stability of society, and splitting up the unity of the Malay Muslim community.

At a higher level, a party who has power and determination frequently uses its authority to obstruct its adversary's influence in the society. In this sense, the

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<sup>124</sup>Some reformists, sometimes, would daringly take impolite action such as scolding and shouting to the *imām* after the prayer. In one case of the researcher's experience at the State Mosque of Perlis in past few years, a reformist follower, who prayed behind a young *imām* who was identified as a traditionalist, stood up immediately after the prayer amidst hundreds of other *ma'mūms* shouting angrily to the *imām* for his "improper" prayer, as he uttered the intention of prayer and recited *basmalah* audibly. He and many other reformists were seen to have done *mufāraqah* (retracted himself from following the *imām*) as the *imām* started the prayer.

<sup>125</sup>Basri Ibrahim, *Khilafiah, Bid'ah & Maslahah Umum*, op.cit., pp. 197-202.

traditionalists, who are dominant in local religious authorities in almost every state in Malaysia have made numerous attempts to eliminate the reform movement. Groups associated to *Kaum Muda* or identified as having links with the Wahhābīs, have been frequently investigated because of their "deviant" teachings.<sup>126</sup> Several reformist preachers have also been banned from teaching, delivering lectures or handling *da'wah* activities.<sup>127</sup> People are strongly reminded to refrain themselves from the allegedly deviant teachings of the reformists. However, their attempts to annihilate the reform movements have apparently failed as they face strong resistance from these groups and because it is difficult to prove the latter's "deviations."

Both parties realize that their disputes have affected the unity of the Malay Muslim *ummah*, but each of them puts the blame on the opposite party. Academic discussions over disputed matters, whether appearing in their writings or series of forums, dialogues and debates, frequently reach deadlock as they insist on their respective standpoints and refuse to compromise. For instance, in a closed dialogue between the Mufti of Perlis and the *imāms* of all mosques in the state which was held in 1995 to discuss the utterance of the *basmalah* before reciting the *Fātiḥah* in prayer, the Mufti came to the decision to allow them to recite the *basmalah* in the prayer either audibly or inaudibly.<sup>128</sup> However, some *imāms* from the reformist party, perhaps the extreme ones, argued and regarded the Mufti's decision as wrong, since according to their standpoint, the *basmalah* should be recited inaudibly.<sup>129</sup> For another example, in December 1997, an open forum between scholars from the traditionalists and

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<sup>126</sup>Groups such as Persatuan Islah of Perlis and Ittiba' As-Sunnah of Negeri Sembilan, which are very active in promoting their reform ideas have been frequently investigated by the respective State Department of Religious Affairs for the alleged deviations in their teachings. The permits given to organize *da'wah* programmes have also been retracted numerous times. In addition, various books published by KTF Institut owned by Ittiba' As-Sunnah of Negeri Sembilan are banned by JAKIM..

<sup>127</sup>The states of Johore and Selangor, for instance, have banned some reformists preachers such as Hussein Yee, Abdullah Yasin, Rasul Dahri and Hashim Ghani from holding any teaching activities or giving any lectures in the respective states. They also retracted permit (*tauliah*) of *da'wah* from local religious teachers who were believed to involve in the reformists' group. See for example, report in *Berita Harian*, 20 November 1998.

<sup>128</sup>See *Utusan Malaysia*, 11 October 1995.

<sup>129</sup>See Chapter Four pp. 164-165 for their detailed standpoint and arguments.

reformists of Perlis was held to discuss and reach reconciliation over some disputed topics, but it ended up without any solution, and, as there was no tolerance between the two parties, it has added more confusion, disagreement and chaos among thousands in the audience.<sup>130</sup> Their sincerity of intention to reach a point of understanding had been sunk by their respective egoism, sternness and uncontrolled emotions. Both parties seem to have shown prejudice and a harsh attitude against each other and it seems difficult to reach reconciliation. Lack of tolerance in disputed matters has worsened their conflict.

The matters which are disputed between the traditionalists and the reformists are not part of the basic fundamentals of Islam, but only matters of its branches which mainly revolve around issues of *fiqh*. It should therefore have not been a main issue to cause conflict and disunity. However, as the two parties fail to compromise, the disputed branch matters are seen as though they are cardinal issues that cannot be tolerated. Intolerance of the two parties has thus become a main cause of their conflict which results in division and schism in the Malay Muslim community.

## Impact of Conflict

Perennial antagonism between the traditionalists and the reformists since the emergence of Islamic reformism in Malaya in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century has in fact left a tremendous impact on the Malay Muslim community. The conflict over the issues of *ʿibādah* which is regarded as a microcosm of general conflict between the two parties has undoubtedly engendered varied implications in the religious life of the Malay Muslim society. On the one hand, one might easily observe substantial negative consequences of the conflict such as schism, division and enmity within the society as elaborated earlier, but on the other hand, one might also view that this conflict in the

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<sup>130</sup>This forum was held on 23 December 1997 at the Kompleks Warisan Negeri Perlis, on general title "Forum Al-Sunnah."

long run as generating a positive impact of varying substance on the Malay Muslim community.

For one thing, the disputes between the traditionalists and reformists which are largely expressed as controversies about ritual have transformed, though not, perhaps, to a considerable degree, the Malay Muslims' traditional perceptions of *ʿibādah*. In the present era of pervasive Islamic resurgence which is contributed to by the reformists as well as the traditionalists, the people with their strong will and awareness are enthusiastic about returning to the original Islam which is mirrored by the recent popular slogan "returning to the Qur'ān and the *sunnah* of the Prophet." In returning to the original Islam, they feel that it is extremely important to seek an authentic way of practising *ʿibādah* as exemplified in the *sunnah* of the Prophet. Thus, it is also necessary to purify their practices of certain *ʿibādah* which are believed to have been adulterated by impurities of customs and beliefs derived from *adat*, or based merely on the words of traditional *ʿulamā'*, a method that is consistently promulgated by the reformists. In this sense, when the conflict over the issues of *ʿibādah* occurs, most people seem to be more interested in adopting the reformists' approach which emphasizes the concept of borderless *fiqh* and applying the method of *tarjih*. This tendency might be observed, for instance, through their warm response to the reform-oriented religious programmes and literatures,<sup>131</sup> and also through their great enthusiasm to the rapidly growing internet-based Islamic websites dealing with *fiqh* issues organized by certain reformist groups.<sup>132</sup>

As a result of this perceptual change, we might observe the changes as well as the decline of certain traditional rituals attributable to the traditionalists. For example, in certain areas, especially in the state of Perlis, the *talqīn* ceremony after

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<sup>131</sup>In addition to the local literatures, the reform-oriented literatures written by the contemporary Muslim great thinkers such as Ismāʿīl al-Farūqī, Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, and especially Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī which most of their writings are translated in Malay, are always in demand in market. The voluminous Malay version of Al-Qaraḍāwī's *Fatāwā Muʿāṣarah* for example, has been reprinted by its publisher Pustaka Salam numerous times since its first print in 1994.

<sup>132</sup>Web pages dealt with in Malay such as Al-Ahkam Online (<http://al-ahkam.net/>) and Sudut Fiqh ([www.jim.org.my/fiqh](http://www.jim.org.my/fiqh)) which adopt an eclectic approach and *tarjih* in its answers to *fiqh* problems are very popular among Malay Muslim internet users who are interested in religious materials.

the burial has been totally left, or, if it is still done, its concept has been modified from a typical manner of advising the deceased to answer the Angels' questions in the grave to giving a short reminder about death to those who are present at the burial and praying for the happiness of both the dead and the living. A similar effect is detected with regard to the *tahlīl* ceremony which is usually held with the feast of the deceased (*kenduri arwah*), where in certain places it has been relinquished and instead, it is replaced by a brief sermon (*tadhkirah*) regarding death delivered by a pious man before the feast. Several other practices, such as, for example, chanting prayers before the *adhān*, the reminder to maintain silence during the *khuṭbah* of the Friday prayer, chanting the blessing upon the Prophet between the two *khuṭbahs* and reciting the Qur'ān on the grave, which were widely practised in the past seem to have been nowadays abandoned on the grounds that they are not quite in harmony with the *sunnah* of the Prophet. The traditional practice of paying *fidyah* to make up the deceased's missed prayers is now virtually extinct<sup>133</sup> as it is regarded as having no basis in the primary textual evidence. In holding the feasts of the deceased (*kenduri arwah*), most Malays do not follow the traditionally specified days any longer, for these days are identified as being elements of customs originating from superstitious beliefs, and instead, they hold it whenever they wish. Furthermore, for most educated Malays, touching one's spouse's skin without desire is no longer considered as nullifying one's ablution, but is regarded as a *rukḥṣah* for husband and wife.

In a broader scope, the perceptual change of *ʿibādah* has indirectly given a positive impact to the development of religious or *fiqh* education in Malaysia. Though it is known that the teaching of *fiqh* based on the texts of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* is predominant at school and *pondok* levels, which thus successfully make the influence of Shāfiʿī-based traditionalism deeply entrenched in Malay society, it now seems to be increasingly neutralized by the reform-oriented *fiqh* taught at the university level,<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>133</sup>Though it is not widely practised, this practice can still be traced among the peasant society in some villages of the state of Kedah.

<sup>134</sup>For example, the subject of *Fiqh al-ʿibādah* taught for undergraduate students of Islamic Studies in various universities in Malaysia, such as in the Academy of Islamic Studies at the University of Malaya and the Faculty of Islamic Studies at the National University of Malaysia, refer mainly to the *fiqh* books of the four *madhhabs* or to those books comprising the rulings of four *madhhabs* such as Ibn Rusḥd's



or at reformist-owned private religious schools<sup>135</sup> as well as at the local religious classes organized by the reformists.<sup>136</sup> Furthermore, the teaching of comparative *fiqh* (*Fiqh al-Muqāran*) at the university level<sup>137</sup> specifically exposes to the students the rulings of prominent *madhhabs*, their methodologies in inferring the rulings and methods of *tarjīḥ* in selecting the strongest ruling from them. This has broken the longstanding monopoly of Shāfi‘ism in the teaching of *fiqh* among Malay Muslim society and has also transformed the traditional outlook of mono-source *fiqh* to the eclectic style.

This development, in addition to signifying a creation of a new perception of *‘ibādah* among Malays, is perhaps, an early signal of the decline of Islamic traditionalism. This is advocated by the fact that the shifting of the Malay Muslims’ paradigm of *‘ibādah* is occurring not only among ordinary Muslims in general but also among the circle of traditionalists themselves. It seems, though not clearly, that the traditionalists to some extent agree with the reformists about the necessity of reform, and therefore it is not uncommon, in addition to ignoring the traditional practices regarded as *bid‘ah* or superstitious, that the traditionalists in some cases seem to have embarked on some reform ideas previously propounded by the reformists. For example, the present Mufti of Perlis, Mat Jahya Hussin who is known as a great adherent of traditionalism did not give a normal *talqīn* at the recent funeral service

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*Bidāyat al-Mujtahid*, Sayyid Sābiq’s *Fiqh al-Sunnah*, al-Jazīri’s *al-Fiqh ‘alā al-Madhāhib al-Arb‘ah* and Wahbah al-Zuhaylī’s *al-Fiqh al-Islāmī wa Adillatuh*. See for example, *Buku Panduan Program Ijazah Dasar Tahun Akademik 1999/2000* (Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Pengajian Islam Universiti Malaya, 1999), p. 62; *Panduan Pra Siswazah 1999/2000 Fakulti Pengajian Islam* (Bangi: Fakulti Pengajian Islam, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 1999), pp. 22-23.

<sup>135</sup>Such as in Ma‘had al-Tarbiyyah (MATRI) in Perlis, a secondary religious school run by a progressive reformist group called ABIM Perlis led by a local prominent scholar Dahlan Mohd. Zain. The subject of *fiqh* taught at the *Marḥalah Khāṣṣah* (Special Level) in this school refers to the text of Sayyid Sābiq’s *Fiqh al-Sunnah*.

<sup>136</sup>For example, the teachers of the Persatuan al-Islah Perlis use Ibn Qudāmah’s *al-Mughnī*, Sayyid Sābiq’s *Fiqh al-Sunnah* and al-Jazīri’s *al-Fiqh ‘alā al-Madhāhib al-Arb‘ah* in its *fiqh* classes. In Kelantan, for further example, Nik Abd. Aziz Nik Mat, a top figure of PAS who is also a Chief Minister of Kelantan, uses Sayyid Sābiq’s *Fiqh al-Sunnah* as a textbook for his *fiqh* class in his famous religious lecture every Friday morning at Kota Bharu.

<sup>137</sup>This subject is taught, for instance, at the Academy of Islamic Studies at University of Malaya. See *Buku Panduan Ijazah Tinggi, Akademi Pengajian Islam Universiti Malaya Sesi 2002/03*, pp. 53-54.

of the Ruler of Perlis, but instead, he delivered a brief sermon reminding those who were present at the funeral service about death and ended it by praying to God for the bliss of the deceased and the living. In the case of the expansion of zakatable resources, as another instance, the traditionalists in the religious authorities, in espousing the government program to reform the *zakāh* system, moved a step forward, despite some resistant voices from their counterparts, to introduce *zakāh* on new resources, such as monthly salary, corporates and new types of agricultural products, an idea that was originally put forward by the reformists. The using of the method of *imkān al-ru'yah*, i.e. the combination of the astronomical calculation (*ḥisāb*) with the sighting (*ru'yah*), in determining the beginning of the months of Ramaḍān and Syawwāl is another example that some ideas of reform have influenced the traditionalists' thought.

However, as this new trend develops, it creates anxiety among many other traditionalists as it is viewed as a massive threat to their firmly established practices and norms which are strongly preserved as a distinctive identity of Muslims in the Malay world. Thus, for many traditionalists, the reformist-oriented elements, though they might be to certain extent accepted, should be strictly controlled so that they do not threaten the Malay Muslims' preserved identities and sacrosanct traditions. In spite of their approval of certain reform efforts over Islamic affairs,<sup>138</sup> especially reforms concerning the Islamic legal administration and judiciary systems, attempts to reform traditional rituals and practices performed in manners associated with the Malays, such as the *tahlīl* ceremony, chanting *dhikrs* en masse after congregational prayer, *marhaban* and *berzanji* ceremonies, *kenduri arwah* and so on, are strongly denounced and sometimes perceived as tantamount to heresy.<sup>139</sup> For them, inasmuch

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<sup>138</sup>Reform on these matters, however, are agreed by most traditionalists with scepticism. In their eyes, any attempts to reform the administration of Islamic law in Malaysia should consider the sensitivity of the attachment to the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* by the Malay Muslims, and therefore, some reform efforts at federal level have been rejected by most of the official 'ulamā'. This is seen, for example, in a case when a bill of the new Administration of Muslim Family law formulated by the Sharf'ah and Civil Technical Committee was rejected by them, mainly because of the nature of the bill which combines laws from the four *madhhabs*. This is perceived by the traditionalists as an attempt to diminish the dominion of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* in the Malay world. See Rahimin Affandi Abdul Rahim, *Islamic Legal Reform in Malaysia: A Critical Analysis*, (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1999), pp. 320-321.

<sup>139</sup>See for example, *Berita Harian*, 12 December 1997, p. 10.

as Islam is regarded as a part of an indivisible Malay identity, any Islamic practices and rites are also considered as the most important parts of Malay custom and culture that must be firmly preserved. Furthermore, when Islam is perceived as the foundation of Malay custom, any practices or rites related to Islam, though they are not prescribed in the primary textual evidence but have been established in the society as the people are accustomed to practise them in certain ways, are accepted as Islamic and thus are seriously defended. This attitude is also based on the principle that the local custom (*ʿurf*) is acknowledged by Islam as one of its additional sources of law, and thus, those accustomed practices are perceived as having a strong basis in Islam. For this reason, the traditionalists perceive the attempt to eliminate these traditional practices and rites on the ground that they are *bidʿah*, as propagated by the reformists, as an effort to destroy Islamic culture and sacrosanct Malay Muslim tradition and identity.

The traditionalists, on the one hand, generally consider the reformists as a menace to the Malay Muslim community who have only brought negative effects such as division and confusion, to the community. The struggle of the reformists, according to the traditionalists, has no strong foundation, and thus, it only has bad impact on the community. On the other hand, they sincerely admit that the reformists have successfully promulgated Islamic awareness and several positive ideas among the Malay Muslim community.<sup>140</sup> To the traditionalists, Islamic reformism is a great challenge to their longstanding conservatism, and that challenge should be wisely answered in order to preserve their status quo as well as the solidarity of and stability in the community. A similar attitude is detected among the reformists who treat Islamic traditionalism as a major hurdle for them to handle, as the belief in conservatism has is deeply rooted among the Malay Muslim community, but nevertheless, for the sake of the betterment of the community, they believe that reform must inevitably take place. As these two opposing groups react against each other to defend their respective idealism and also rejectionism, it has, in an aspect, resulted in discord and division among the community. However, in another aspect,

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<sup>140</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Pengaruh Madhhab Shafi'i*, op.cit., p. iii; idem, *Perbezaan Aliran Mazhab Fiqh*, op.cit., pp. 41-42.

the spirit of rivalry between the two parties has generated attitudes conducive to intellectual depth as well as to Islamic resurgence. This can be seen through the endeavours of both groups, who with every possible effort increase the campaigns to proselytize their respective ideas and principles to the masses through various methods such as literature, lectures and debates, or through the setting up of their own educational institutions. The rapid growth of both reform and traditional-oriented literature, religious intellectual activities, academic polemics and educational programmes which receive a warm response from masses of people is seen as an early sign of the process of intellectual depth among Malay Muslims, especially their scholars, which has also contributed to the flourishing of the Islamic phenomenon of resurgence in Malaysia.<sup>141</sup>

From another perspective, this conflict has also urged the traditionalists to reshape their attitude towards Islamic reform. Though in the early stages the traditionalists viewed the emergence of the reform movement as a vast problem in the Malay Muslim community, later, to some extent, they have agreed on the necessity of reform and renewal.<sup>142</sup> The change of attitude among the traditionalists towards Islamic reform might be traced through their affirmative standpoint with regards to some questions such as *ijtihād*, *talfīq* and *maṣlaḥah*.

In the case of *ijtihād*, for instance, the traditionalists' attitude of rejecting *ijtihād* and being pro-*taqlid*, has apparently changed so that now they accept *ijtihād* in principle, but, unlike the reformists, they agree with it only in certain senses and to a limited degree. For the traditionalists, *ijtihād* in practice is the interpretation or application of traditional Islamic law, not a reinterpretation that is open to change in law. This is because they believe that Islam has been expressed comprehensively in its classical formulation, developed by the law schools during the early Islamic centuries, and embodied and preserved in the manuals and commentaries on Islamic

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<sup>141</sup>See Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Pengislaman, Pembudayaan dan Pertembungan Budaya di Malaysia," in Wan Abdul Kadir Yusoff and Zainal Abidin Borhan, *Ideologi dan Kebudayaan Kebangsaan*, (Kuala Lumpur: Jabatan Pengajian Melayu, University of Malaya, 1985), p. 76.

<sup>142</sup>Abdul Halim El-Muhammady, *Pengaruh Madhhab Shafi'i*, op.cit., p. iii.



law. The traditional interpretation of Islam, according to them, governed the Muslim community down through the centuries and remains valid for today and for all ages. Therefore, they perceive a process of reformulation that alters or replaces traditional Islamic law with new prescriptions as unnecessary. As Islamic law is a divinely revealed path, it is not the law that must change or modernize, but the community that must conform to God's law. Based on this belief, it is seen that while agreeing on *ijtihād*, the traditionalists tend to restrict its role in preference to, and out of deference to, the established opinions of the masters of the schools of Islamic jurisprudence.<sup>143</sup>

Unlike *ijtihād*, which is limitedly approved, the doctrine of *talfīq* seems now to be widely accepted by the traditionalists. Though this concept was theoretically approved in the past, in practise it was only applied in a few cases, such as *zakāt al-fitr* as mentioned earlier. The concept of *talfīq* is now widely applied especially in matters related to laws such as the Muslim Family Law, Shariah Criminal Code and Evidence Law of the Shariah Court. The provisions in these laws are not derived from the rulings of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab* alone, but are also derived from the rulings of the three other prominent *madhhabs*, according to which are thought as more applicable for contemporary and local circumstances.<sup>144</sup> The combination of the rulings of the four *madhhabs* in these laws indicates that "multi-sources" *fiqh* is now accepted among the traditionalists. The doctrine of *talfīq* is also seen in the practice of the Islamic financial system in Malaysia nowadays, in which the rulings and principles of the four prominent *madhhabs* are utilized. Though it is known that the implementation of *talfīq* in these matters might be not fully undertaken by the traditionalists, their silent approval generally signifies that they have been somehow influenced by reform ideas.

The prevailing adoption of *talfīq* in contemporary Islamic law in Malaysia is in

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<sup>143</sup>Muhammad Kamal Hassan, *Muslim Intellectual Responses to New Order Modernization in Indonesia* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1980), p. ix.

<sup>144</sup>See for example, *Muslim Family Law Act of Federal Territories 1984 (Act 303)*; *Shariah Criminal Code of Kedah 1988 (no. 8 of 1988)*; *Enakmen Keterangan Mahkamah Syariah, no 2, 1991 Kelantan*. See also, Mahmud Saedon Awang Othman, "Rang Undang-undang Kanun Jenayah Syariah (II) 1993: Satu Analisis," in *Jurnal Syariah*, no.2. vol 2, July 1994, pp. 94-103.



fact built on the principle of *maṣlaḥah*. It is undeniable that this principle has been a fundamental element in the application of Islamic law in the past, but it was strictly confined within the border of the laws of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. Through a robust campaign, the reformists have apparently been successful in promulgating a concept of borderless *fiqh* among the Malay Muslim community, and thus, it is discerned that the application of the principle of *maṣlaḥah* in Malaysian Islamic law has now expanded beyond the Shāfiʿī laws. An obvious example is the process of issuing *fatwā* by the Mufti, in which he may deliver *fatwā* based on the rulings of any *madhhabs* which are in harmony with public interests.<sup>145</sup> For instance, section 39 of the Act of The Administration of Muslim Law of Wilayah Persekutuan 1993 allocates that in issuing any *fatwā* or certifying any opinion, the Mufti should ordinarily refer to the accepted views of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. If the Mufti should consider that following the accepted views of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* would lead to a situation which is repugnant to the public interest (*maṣlaḥah*), he may adopt the accepted rulings of the Ḥanafī, Mālikī or Ḥanbalī *madhhabs*. Should the Mufti then determine that following the accepted views of the four *madhhabs* would be detrimental to the public interest, he may resolve the question according to his own judgement without being bound by any *madhhab*.<sup>146</sup> The same law in other states seems to have a similar provision.<sup>147</sup> This provision is applied in some cases, such as in the case of payment of *zakāt al-fiṭr* in form of cash money, which is adopted from the Ḥanafī standpoint. This replaces the Shāfiʿī standpoint that *zakāt al-fiṭr* must be given in form of local food, i.e. rice in the context of Malaysia. In this case, the Ḥanafī standpoint is considered as more compatible with contemporary needs and situation.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>Othman Ishak, *Fatwa Dalam Perundangan Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Fajar Bakti, 1981), pp. 90-93.

<sup>146</sup>See Act 505 *The Administration of Muslim Law of Wilayah Persekutuan 1993*, 39 (1), (2) (3).

<sup>147</sup>See for example, *Administration of Muslim Law Enactment of Selangor*, No. 3, 1952, 42; *Undang-undang Majlis Agama dan Istiadat Melayu dan Mahkamah-mahkamah Qadi Terengganu*, No. 1 1953, 43 (1); *Peraturan Jawatankuasa Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan*, No. 14 (1938), 42; *Undang-undang Pentadbiran Agama Islam Perlis*, No. 3 1963, 7(4).

<sup>148</sup>This *fatwā* is practised in all states in Malaysia. See Othman Ishak, "Talfiq Dalam Perundangan Islam," op.cit., p. 97. See also, *Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Terengganu* (Terengganu: Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Terengganu, 1970), p. 2.

In order to make the above provision clear and to define how far the law of other *madhhabs* can be adopted, the Fatwa Committee in every state has drawn up outlines for guidance. For instance, the Fatwa Committee of Wilayah Persekutuan formulates that:<sup>149</sup>

i. All *fatwās* must be referred to the definite standpoint of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. If the standpoints of other *madhhabs* are chosen, they must be approved by the Yang Dipertuan Agong.

ii. The Muslim community are not bound to practise the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, but are free to practise any other *madhhabs* they wish, provided that they do not denounce those who practise the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*.

iii. The teachings of other *madhhabs* should not be openly taught to the public, but they can be taught in closed academic discussion.

iv. It is legally wrong to teach other than the teachings of Shāfiʿī *madhhab* to the open public.

v. If a *fatwā* based on the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* has been issued, no one is permitted to question it by using the arguments of the other *madhhabs*.

Though on the one hand this policy signifies the traditionalists' deep adherence to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, on the other, it has unlocked the shackle of Shāfiʿī-based law and opened a wider space to the Malay Muslim community to choose from the compendia of Islamic law. In this case, the traditionalists' general acceptance of the doctrine of *talfīz* can be regarded as an indicator of their acceptance of some aspects of Islamic reformism.

The traditionalists' new perspective on Islamic reformism does not definitely mean they have given up conservatism, but can be seen as merely a delayed reaction due to their sceptical behaviour in facing change. However, by their adoption of some ideas of Islamic reformism, one could classify the traditionalists into a new category, i.e. the neo-traditionalists, who are, according to some scholars, more progressive in attitude, but have more of a tendency to be involved in social, economic and political

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<sup>149</sup>See *Fatwa Wilayah Persekutuan* (1975-1986) Minute no. 55.

activities.<sup>150</sup> In general, neo-traditionalism is seen as a transitional position from traditionalism to any other group. It may be, however, that as a position it has its own inherent permanent protagonists. In experiencing change, this group urges a gradual change, seeing the advantage in certain elements of modern technology, for example, but wanting to withstand the rush of the acceptance of it all. For them, in the short term, urgent change may be required, but in the long run, Islam will reign supreme.<sup>151</sup> This attitude is pervasively found among many Malay Muslims nowadays who were before known as the traditionalists. According to some scholars, this type of group is best exemplified by the Al-Arqam group.<sup>152</sup>

Changing character does not occur among the traditionalists alone, but happens on the reformists' side too. It can be traced especially in matters pertaining to their manner of proselytizing reform ideas and antagonizing Islamic traditionalism. Some undiplomatic manners, such as harsh attacks, a confrontative attitude and the use of extreme language in opposing Islamic traditionalism, which were sometimes regarded as common features of the reformists' campaigns in the past, seem to be declining in the present time. They might have realized that such a harsh orientation would only bring negative results which would also ruin their programme of reform. Instead, a courteous, reasonable and compromising attitude seems to be their new characteristic in promoting reform ideas to the masses. Such an approach, as can be widely seen throughout their reform programmes, especially in their literature and lectures, seems to be well accepted by all Malay Muslims including the traditionalists. Most of their recently published books discussing disputed issues such as questions of *bid'ah* and *taqlīd* of a *madhhab*, seem to be relatively moderate, fairly analysed and

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<sup>150</sup>See Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia Sejarah dan Aliran* (Jakarta: Gema Insani Press, 1997), p. 91.

<sup>151</sup>William E. Shepard, "Islam and Ideology: Towards a Typology," in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, no. 19, 1987, pp. 319-320; Andrew Rippin, *Muslim: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices: the Contemporary Period* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 40.

<sup>152</sup>See Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Pemikiran Islam di Malaysia, Sejarah dan Aliran*, op.cit., p. 91.

reasonable.<sup>153</sup> This new character of the reformists is in fact a common trend of Islamic reformism at the present time, which might be illustrated as "the reformist moderate model which advocates the use of peaceful means to produce desirable change."<sup>154</sup>

This effort is also seen as an attempt at adopting the moderate approach outlined by the Ikhwān al-Muslimūn of Egypt, the reformists' most inspirational group, in managing conflict within the community. The Ikhwān is considered as the most successful Islamic reform group which is acceptable by the mass of Muslims nowadays, and it is regarded as a role model because of its moderate method of *da'wah*. As regards the method of solving the conflict between Muslims over issues of *fiqh*, the principles laid down by the Ikhwān in this case are chiefly found in the writings of its founder, Ḥasan al-Bannā, such as in his famous *al-Uṣūl al-ʿIshrīn*. For example, in the eighth principle of *al-Uṣūl al-ʿIshrīn*, al-Bannā formulates that:

"Differences on the branch matters of *fiqh* should not be a reason to cause division in the religion, and it should not either lead to enmity and hatred. For every *mujtahid* is a reward. In cases of disagreement, it is permissible to exercise an academic investigation in an atmosphere of love and cooperation for the sake of God with the aim of realising the truth, and it should not lead to fanaticism and obstinacy."<sup>155</sup>

Another principle inspiring the reformists in this sense is Rashīd Riḍā's formula which was later consistently propagated by al-Bannā and has been a popular maxim of the Ikhwān: "we unite on what we agree with, and we excuse each other for what we dispute on."<sup>156</sup> By intensifying these formulas in the reformists' reform activities, it might be seen as a starting point in the effort to reduce conflict between them and

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<sup>153</sup>Such as recent books published by the pro-reform publishers, such as the ASA of Kelantan, KTF Institute of Negeri Sembilan, Perniagaan Jahabersa of Johore and others. See for example, Hafiz Fidaus Abdullah, *Pedoman-pedoman Bermazhab dalam Islam* (Johor: Perniagaan Jahabersa, 2000); Basri Ibrahim, *Khilafiah, Bid'ah & Maslahah Umum* (Kuala Lumpur: Darul Nu'man, 1997); Rasul Dahari, *Bid'ah* (Johor: Perniagaan Jahabersa, 1999).

<sup>154</sup>See Walid Saif, "Human Rights and Islamic Revivalism," in Tarek Mitri ed., *Religion, Law and Society: A Christian-Muslim Discussion* (Geneva: WCC Publications, 1995), pp. 59-60.

<sup>155</sup>Ḥasan al-Bannā, *al-Uṣūl al-ʿIshrīn* (Cairo: Muassasah al-Khalij al-ʿArabī, 1988), p. 10.

<sup>156</sup>Yusuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwat al-Islāmiyyah Bayna al-Ikhtilāf al-Mashrūʿ wa al-Tafarruq al-Madhmūm* (Beirut: Muassasah al-Risālah, 4<sup>th</sup> ed. 1995), p. 97.

the traditionalists.

Considering the above-mentioned realities, we might conclude that the conflict between the traditionalists and reformists, though in one aspect it has brought about disunity among Malay Muslims, has in another aspect resulted in various positive impacts for them. Though history witnesses that the conflict between them has been a bitter experience for the Malay Muslim community, in the long run, it has generated a new paradigm in their religious thought. Reconciliation between the opposing parties in the very near future is likely to be impossible, but recent developments signify that there has been a good start for them to build a basis of understanding, and in the long term, the expected unity might eventually be a reality.

## Future Prospects

### Islamic Reformism and Traditionalism in Current Islamic Resurgence

The emergence of Islamic reformism has undoubtedly given birth to various changes as well as conflicts within Malay Muslim society. Much as at the beginning it was vehemently challenged by the established traditionalism, in the course of time, the ideas of reform are seen to have increasingly penetrated the thick wall of orthodoxy, and consequently transformed the Malay religious thought from its conservative nature to a new outlook.<sup>157</sup> As asserted by some scholars, the previous reformists did not leave any detailed blueprint for Islamic reform, but it has left a firm foundation for later generation to resume the reform endeavours in a more organized and comprehensive framework.<sup>158</sup> This has been actualized by the birth of an Islamic resurgence from the early seventies onwards, which is dominated by reform-oriented

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<sup>157</sup>See Mohd. Radzi Othman and O.K. Rahmat, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam*, op.cit., pp. 123-129.

<sup>158</sup>Mohd Sarim Mustajab, "Gerakan Islah Islamiyah di Tanah Melayu 1906-1948," in *Malaysia: Sejarah dan Proses Pembangunan* (Kuala Lumpur: Persatuan Sejarah Malaysia, 1979), pp. 134-135.



groups who intensively propagate Islamic reformism among the Malay masses.

Though both Islamic reformism and traditionalism play important roles in current pervasive Islamic revival, it seems that the former, represented by various *da'wah*-oriented organizations, such as ABIM, PAS, JIM and other local reform-oriented groups operating at the state level, such as the Persatuan Al-Islah of Perlis, Ittiba' As-Sunnah of Negeri Sembilan and Gerakan Ansar As-Sunnah of Melaka, is more influential among the Malay Muslim community. The prevailing Islamic resurgence in Malaysia has pulled Malay Muslim society to be in the mainstream of resurgence, leaving the so-called world of inertia and traditional hidebound attitudes to adopting what are believed to be the dynamic ideas of reform. In the current era of Islamic resurgence, reform ideas are well accepted by the mass of Malay Muslims, and those who promote ideas of renewal are no longer labelled as heretics, but are revered and respected.<sup>159</sup>

Just as their reformist predecessors, the current reformists put the priority on the purification of Islam from superstitious beliefs and practices and a total liberation of Malay Muslims from un-Islamic "mental bondage."<sup>160</sup> This priority has never changed even if their works seem nowadays, due to their pragmatic attitude, to be more concentrated on reform in contemporary needs in varied realms of life such as in education, politics, law, economics and social justice. The new concerns are in fact part of their prime objective to re-establish Islam in its entirety in the lives of Muslims, or in other words, to re-create an Islamic ethos, an Islamic social order, at the vortex of which is the Islamic human being, guided by the Quran and the Sunnah.<sup>161</sup> What distinguishes the previous reformism from that of the present day is mainly the environment in which the two respective phases have operated. As viewed by Chandra Muzaffar, the emphasis in the past was directed towards colonial, political and constitutional dominance and how it affected Muslim identity and the Muslim struggle for independence, whilst present-day reformism is deeply involved in the

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<sup>159</sup>Mohd. Radzi Othman and O.K. Rahmat, *Gerakan Pembaharuan Islam*, op.cit, p. 123.

<sup>160</sup>Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism and the Political Process in Malaysia," in *Asian Survey*, vol. 21, 1981, p. 1041.

<sup>161</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia* (Petaling Jaya: Penerbit Fajar Bakti, 1987), p. 2.

whole question of the character and direction of Muslim society. In other words, he says, "present Islamic reformism in Malaysia seems to be more involved in the question of identity, symbol and rituals."<sup>162</sup>

With regards to Islamic traditionalism as far as the present is concerned, it is worth noting that the vigorous traditional-oriented groups of Jamaah Tabligh and Al-Arqam have respectively played an essential role in the tide of Islamic resurgence as well as in propagating Islamic traditionalism in Malaysia for decades.<sup>163</sup> Though they did not exactly represent the common traditional style of Malaysian Islamic traditionalism, through their emphasis on conservative attitudes towards Islam they had somehow reinforced the elements of traditionalism among the community. However, as concluded by Chandra, neither the Al-Arqam movement nor the Tabligh group, with their traditionalist approach to Islam, have succeeded in convincing the thinking stratum of society that the religion, as practised by them, is a viable alternative to contemporary civilization with all its ills.<sup>164</sup> When the government banned the Al-Arqam group and restricted the activities of Tabligh several years ago, it was seen as if Islamic traditionalism had lost its important actors in this era of resurgent Islam. However, it did not seem to affect Islamic traditionalism in general, although it may have lessened its influence in the society. Notwithstanding the fact, Islamic traditionalism remains well-entrenched in its traditional stronghold of the religious establishment and officialdom, as well as among Sūfī groups and at the level of traditional rural society.

In the present Islamic revival, the prevalent religious consciousness among Malay Muslims is perceived to have assisted Islamic reformism in gaining its tremendous momentum, and it has consequently been an overriding force which is

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<sup>162</sup>See Chandra Muzaffar, "Islamic Resurgence: A Global View," in Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (eds.), *Islam and Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986), pp. 6-7.

<sup>163</sup>See Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., pp. 44-48; Abdul Rahman Haji Abdullah, *Gerakan Islam Tradisional Di Malaysia Sejarah dan Pemikiran Jamaat Tabligh & Darul Arqam* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Kintan, 1992), pp.7-9, 72-79.

<sup>164</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., pp. 47-48.

responsible in shaping the character of the future Malay Muslim community. The impact of Islamic reformism in contemporary Malaysia can be discerned through the rapid development of Islam in its most organized forms, as a result of the strenuous endeavours among the Malay Muslim masses through their *dakwah*-motivated groups as well as the government itself. It is discernible that through the inculcation of Islamic reformism in the Malay Muslim populace by the *da'wah* movement, their religious consciousness is getting stronger than ever, and this has been manifested in various ways as elaborated earlier in the Chapter Two. Apart from varied manifestations of this consciousness, which are basically related to the individual and his perception of his responsibilities towards Islam, Islamic reformism has also been a catalyst for a greater consciousness, i.e. a consciousness of the need for an Islamic social order. Countless seminars, forums and academic discourses organized by the reformists have called for the establishment of an Islamic education system, an Islamic economy, an Islamic political order and an Islamic legal framework. In the eyes of the reformists, since Islam is held as a panacea for all the problems of mankind, it must govern the whole system of their life, that is, to be specific, Islam must be interpreted politically to mean an Islamic State.<sup>165</sup> This demand is getting stronger and stronger by the day. The passion behind it, fortified by the enthusiastic support of a growing number of young adherents, according to the observers, is an unmistakable mark of present times.<sup>166</sup>

The government's reaction to this stream of Islamic reformism is relatively supportive. Since 1981, following the administration of Mahathir Mohamad, the present Prime Minister, some marked changes have taken place for Islam. The most notable effort he has made is to introduce an Islamization policy by inculcating Islamic values in the government machineries. The products of the Islamization policy are the variety of Islamic programmes as mentioned previously in the Chapter Two. A primary motivating factor for such breadth of Islamic programmes under the Mahathir

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<sup>165</sup>On the subject of the probability of the creation of Islamic State in Malaysia, see Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia From Revivalism to Islamic State?* (Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1993).

<sup>166</sup>Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., p. 5.

administration must be the pressures coming from the collective force of the *da'wah* movements, Islamic intellectuals, and the Islamic Party, PAS. Mahathir himself seems quite genuine in wanting to practice universal Islamic values and principles in his governance of the country. The list of institutions and policies initiated by his administration have been among the most impressive if compared to those launched by other Muslim-dominated states in the world.<sup>167</sup> However, according to some scholars, the major explanation of Mahathir's supportive policies in favour of Islam is his attempt to outwit PAS in their legitimacy quest for Malay-Muslim votes.<sup>168</sup> Notwithstanding this claim, it is discernible that this increasing emphasis on Islam by the Malaysian ruling elite is the more understandable as, in recent years, there are indications of a closer identification with Islam taking root amongst the general Muslim populace. Hence, whatever the reasons are, the Islamisation process in Malaysia may continue to be a strong force or factor in the politics of the country in the years ahead.

In this era of Islamic revivalism, Islamic reformism has undoubtedly been a important role in characterizing the pattern of Malay politics, and it is expected that such a reality will accelerate in the future. The younger generation will continue to romanticize the ideal of a pristine Islam in spite of the obstacles in the way of Islamic revivalism. Islamic reformists are expected to continue their efforts to agitate the minds of all groups, including the general public, the political parties and the government. In parallel with this development, the forces against Islamic reformism may raise a greater challenge to it. Apart from the non-Muslim Malaysians who may object to the strict Islamization of society, the mass of the Malay populace who still hold fast to Islamic traditionalism is likely to remain opposed to the current reformism. Taking these arguments into consideration, it is predicted that the conflict

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<sup>167</sup>Hussin Mutalib, *Islam in Malaysia*, op.cit., p. 79.

<sup>168</sup>Husin Mutalib, *Islam and Ethnicity in Malay Politics* (Singapore: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 35 and *passim*; idem, *Islam in Malaysia*, op.cit., pp. 31-32 and *passim*; Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism," op.cit., pp. 1058; Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence*, op.cit., pp. 80-83.

between the two opposing streams will persist in the future.<sup>169</sup>

## Managing the Conflict

To an extent, Islam, as it should be, has been an integrative factor in Malay Muslim society. However, due to people's varying degrees of perceptions over the religion, Islam has also been a divisive factor in the society. The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists highlighted in this study proves that the collision course insofar as juristic matters are concerned has been a significant cause of division in Malay Muslim society. The previous illustrations and analyses clearly signify that the conflict between the two groups is not a temporary, passing fad or an unimportant development in Malay Muslim society, but has been a major issue which demands the serious concern of the community. In this study, it has been stressed that the conflict between the two groups over issues of *ʿibādah* unavoidably occurs when the respective parties hold different perceptions over some important issues of the religion, and thereafter react confrontatively against each other. Though the conflict does not in general involve the fundamental principles of Islam, it has been a major cause of division and enmity among Malay Muslim society. Thus, even though the conflict has also conveyed a positive impact on the Malay community as elaborated previously, if it is not wisely managed, it will persist as a chronic tumour which would eventually ruin the community. The dispute over the issues of *ʿibādah*, which is mainly juristic, should not have been a reason of division of Muslims. Disagreement in jurisprudence is only a reflection of the jurists' analytical thought resulting from their various methods of judgements and interpretations regarding specific issues. In this case, in order to bring about a reconciliation between the two groups, the attitude of the Companions of the Prophet and the great jurists among the Forefathers in managing disagreements is worth being learned and exemplified by both traditionalists and

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<sup>169</sup>See Mohamad Abu Bakar, "Islamic Revivalism", op.cit., pp. 1058-1059; Judith Nagata, *The Reflowering of Malaysian Islam* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), pp. 238-241.



reformists.<sup>170</sup>

The Companions and the great jurists had reasons to justify their differences of opinion, but they also demonstrated great tolerance in managing their disagreements. They raised themselves above emotional impulses where issues of dispute were concerned, and they managed to tolerate and admit any deficiency on their part and defer to others. Differences of opinion in subsidiary matters were prudently managed without detriment to the fundamental issues such as Islamic brotherhood and solidarity. Among the Companions, for instance, Ibn ʿAbbās and Zayd b. Thābit were known as great jurists who used to differ in many juristic issues. Nonetheless, they managed to solve their disputes without leaving any trace of rancour in their hearts, and upon Zayd's death, Ibn ʿAbbās said: "This is the way knowledge passes away. Today, knowledge in abundance has been buried."<sup>171</sup> ʿUmar and Ibn Masʿūd were also known to have differed on about a hundred juristic issues,<sup>172</sup> but their disagreements did not weaken their mutual respect and love. ʿUmar is reported to have said: "Ibn Masʿūd is a citadel full of knowledge which will benefit the people of Qādisiyyah."<sup>173</sup> Similarly, Ibn Masʿūd commented after ʿUmar's death: "ʿUmar was indeed a fortress of Islam. Once people entered this fortress, they never left it, but when he was assassinated, the fortress began to crack."<sup>174</sup> It is undeniable that disagreements on certain political issues between the Companions had inevitably resulted in some grave incidents in which they physically fought against each other, such as what occurred at the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, but in such dire circumstances, they never lost sight of each other's virtues and merits. Thus, Marwān b. al-Ḥakam who was against ʿAlī in the battle of the Camel said about him: "I did not

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<sup>170</sup>For further discussion on the subject of disagreement in Islam and its ethics, see for example, Ṭāha Jābir al-ʿAlwānī, *The Ethics of Disagreement in Islam* (Illinois: IIIT, 1987); Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwat al-Islāmiyyah Bayna al-Ikhtilāf al-Mashrūʿ wa al-Tafarruq al-Madhmūm*, op.cit.

<sup>171</sup>See Ibn al-Qayyim, *Iʿlām al-Muwaqqiʿīn*, op.cit., vol.1, p. 18.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., vol.2, p. 218.

<sup>173</sup>See Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Kandahlawī, *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah* (Cairo: Dār al-Dayyan, 1987), vol. 3, p.791.

<sup>174</sup>See al-ʿAmidī, *al-Iḥkām fī Uṣūl al-Aḥkām*, op.cit., vol. 6, p. 61.

see anyone more generous in victory than <sup>6</sup>Alī. In the battle of the Camel, he was nothing but our protector. He ordered one of his men to announce that none of the wounded should be finished off.”<sup>175</sup> When <sup>6</sup>Alī was asked whether those who fought against him in the battle of Camel were polytheists or hypocrites, he asserted that they were neither polytheists nor hypocrites, and said: “They are our brothers who committed an injustice against us.”<sup>176</sup>

In the environment of the second and third generations, juristic differences grew rapidly with the emergence of various schools of law as a result of the different methodologies of jurisprudence which they adopted. However, upholding the exemplary pattern set up by their predecessors, their disagreements were also managed in a proper manner. This is because their differences were not the result of egoism or a desire to create discord, but were the implications of their pursuit of the truth. Hence, it was a common practice among them to endorse the judgements of those who passed sound verdicts irrespective of the schools of law they belonged, and to excuse those who seemed to have made a mistake in their judgements.<sup>177</sup> Disagreement over juristic issues never led them to divide, or to criticize and scorn each other. Rather, they had a high degree of esteem for one another, and they firmly united on the principle matters in order to preserve the solidarity of the *ummah*. It is not a purpose of this study to highlight the jurists’ ethical behaviour, but one who studies this particular issue would find so much biographical and historical literature filled with instances of scholarly interaction conducted in an intellectually exacting but highly refined, and gracious manner according to the best tradition of Islam. However, for the sake of clarity, it is worth citing a brief example from which one can observe the sort of ethical behaviour which shaped the life of the Forefather generation and their commitment to the ethics of disagreement.

It is known that the jurists differed with each other concerning several issues

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<sup>175</sup>Al-Kandahlawī, *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, op.cit., vol. 3, p. 791.

<sup>176</sup>See Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Sunan al-Kubrā* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1994), vol. 8, p. 173.

<sup>177</sup>Tāhā Jābir al-‘Alwānī, *The Ethics of Disagreement*, op.cit., p. 90.

in prayer: some recited the *basmalah* at the beginning of *sūrat al-Fātiḥah* but others did not; some uttered it audibly while others said it silently; some recited the *qunūt* supplication in the Fajr prayer but others did not; some renewed their ablution after nose-bleeding, vomiting, cupping and touching women while others did not, and so forth. However, these differences never prevented them from performing the prayer behind each other. Abū Ḥanīfah and his followers, as well as al-Shāfiʿī, who hold that reciting the *basmalah* is obligatory, were reported to have performed prayers behind the scholars of Madīnah who were of the Mālikī school even though they did not recite the *basmalah*.<sup>178</sup> Al-Shāfiʿī was also reported to have performed Fajr prayer behind the followers of Abū Ḥanīfah near his grave in Iraq without making the *qunūt* supplication, although he holds that the *qunūt* supplication is an important part of the Fajr prayer. When he was asked about that, he asserted: "How can I differ from him when I am in his presence?"<sup>179</sup> Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal holds that nose-bleeding and cupping nullify ablution. Nonetheless, when he was asked if people could perform prayer behind an *imām* who did not renew his ablution after bleeding, he replied: "How I could not pray behind Mālik and Saʿīd b. al-Musayyib?"<sup>180</sup>

These simple examples are not meant to prove the inconsistency of the jurists' standpoints, but to illustrate the high reverence for their fellows and the great tolerance between them in managing disagreements. The spirit of tolerance demonstrated by the great jurists, however, generally seems to be less learned and appreciated by the conflicting groups of the traditionalists and reformists in Malaysia. It might be true to say that the responsibility for this failure lies with unthinking followers and "recalcitrant" individuals who become steeped in bigotry and fanaticism. This type of people have apparently failed to perceive the spirit of scholarly interaction which accounted for the differences among jurists, and have a lack of insight into the norms of proper ethics which emanate from sincere intentions, a genuine search for truth, and a desire to ascertain the purpose of the Shariʿah.

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<sup>178</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>179</sup>Ibid., p. 92.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

Regardless of its positive impact, the effect of discord among Malay Muslim traditionalists and reformists has in fact been a great obstacle to the development of the community.

As emphasized before, differences of opinion in intellectual and juristic issues are of the natural phenomena on account of the disparities in understanding, approaches and analytic capacity with which people are created. Disagreement in this sense is healthy since it has been a catalyst for the development of human life. It is this type of disagreement which is illustrated by the Prophet Muḥammad as a sign God's mercy in his saying: "The disagreement of my *ummah* is mercy."<sup>181</sup> Nonetheless, difference of opinion is no longer a mercy when it steers to schism, bickering and enmity, and it will only cause disaster to the *ummah* as hinted at in the Qur'an 6:46: "And obey God and his Messenger, and do not dispute lest you fail and your power depart." It seems that it is in this latter type of disagreement that the reformists and traditionalists are involved, and it has caused the endless antagonism between the two groups. To eradicate the conflict might be a most difficult task, but it is not something impossible. Differences of opinion within Muslim society are always prevalent, but the conflict among them, if unlikely to be terminated, should be reduced to a minimum and should be well managed within the proper ethics and behaviour.

In that sense, it seems that in the society where the conflict prevails, the ethics of disagreement, or what is called *fiqh al-ikhtilāf* (the *fiqh* of disagreement)<sup>182</sup> by some current prominent scholars such as al-Qardāwī, is indispensable to be learned by Muslims especially those who are involved in disputes over religious matters, so that the solidarity of the community can be preserved. For example, in his *al-Ṣaḥwat al-Islāmiyyah bayna al-Ikhtilāf al-Mashrūf wa al-Tafarruq al-Madhmūm*, al-Qaradāwī

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<sup>181</sup>Narrated by al-Suyūṭī in his *al-Jāmi' al-Ṣaḡhīr*. Though this hadith is said to be unauthentic, its meaning is regarded by many scholars as authentic as it is supported by other textual evidence. For further discussion concerning this hadith, see al-Qaradāwī, *al-Saḥwat al-Islāmiyyah*, op.cit., pp. 47-53.

<sup>182</sup>The word *fiqh* used by al-Qaradāwī in this context does not refer to its meaning as a technical term, i.e. jurisprudence, but it is rather used in its lexical meaning, namely understanding of specific matters. In that sense, al-Qaradāwī has introduced several other new *fiqhs*, such as *fiqh al-muwāzanāt*, *fiqh al-awlawiyyāt*, *fiqh al-ḥarakah* and *fiqh al-dawlah*, mainly in the context of Islamic reawakening and the right approaches to it.

outlines some basic principles of the ethics of managing disagreements within Muslim society concerning religious issues and including juristic matters. He maintains that Muslims should be firstly sincere to God, committed to the truth, and free themselves from desires, as he believes that most conflicts within the Muslim community nowadays, though sometimes appearing in an academic outlook, are rather motivated from people's own desires and vested interests. He further asserts that Muslims also need to steer clear from fanaticism to particular groups, individuals or *madhhabs*, since such a fanaticism has been a great impetus to the conflict. In addition to that, the bad attitudes arising from this conflict which then generate schism within the society, such as suspicion, attacking, insulting, slandering, labelling and defaming each other, must be seriously avoided by Muslims. To create a healthy atmosphere of disagreement, Muslims are to restrain themselves from disputation, quarrelling and bickering which would result in rancour and hostility to each other. Instead, they should have discussions over the debatable issues in academic surroundings, in which they can accommodate or compromise their respective understandings to work out the issues.<sup>183</sup> Finally, he repeats the Ikhwān's principle in managing conflict among Muslims, i.e. "To co-operate where there is agreement, and to excuse each other where there is disagreement." By emphasizing this formula, he maintains that disagreements amongst Muslims should not be an obstacle to unity, as they mainly involve the branches of Islam, and there are a lot more spaces in Islam to unite on, especially on its fundamental aspects which are also more significant.<sup>184</sup>

The principles laid down by al-Qaraḍāwī might seem too ideal to be a reality, but they are in fact practicable. Given that al-Qaraḍāwī's thought is acceptable by the mass of Malay Muslims, including both reformists and traditionalists, it is hoped that they can move together to commence the steps towards implementing these principles. By the frequent visits of great contemporary Muslim scholars to Malaysia, such as the late Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, Saʿīd Ramaḍān al-Būṭī, the present Shaykh al-Azhar, Muḥammad Sayyid Ṭanṭawī, and many other scholars who

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<sup>183</sup>Yūsuf al-Qaraḍāwī, *al-Ṣaḥwat al-Islāmiyyah*, op.cit., pp. 117-151.

<sup>184</sup>Ibid., pp. 154-157.



always accentuate the significance of Muslim solidarity and how to deal with the disagreements in the community, it is anticipated that the conflict between the opposing groups can be well managed. Though the conflict over the aspects of *ʿibādah* amongst Muslims in Malaysia at present seems to be not as bad as their conflict in the political arena, it nevertheless contributes to the division of Malay Muslim society, and thus, it demands the serious endeavours of all parties to find out the best solution to the problem.

## CONCLUSIONS

Islamic reform or *iṣlāḥ* has been an important tradition in the history of the Muslim community. This tradition emphasizes the need for the revitalization of faith and practice in rectifying the social and moral decline of the community, by returning to the pristine Islam. Throughout the history of the Muslim community, Islamic reform, which is deeply rooted in the basic soil of Islam, has emerged in various forms depending on the evolution of Islamic thought and the changing circumstances of the community. The emergence of Islamic reform within the Islamic community has been described in modern Islamic literature by a variety of terms, such as Islamic reformism, Islamic modernism, the Salafiyyah, Islamic fundamentalism and others. Such terms have been used to denote different orientations of Islamic reform which have taken place since the early days of Islam until now.

In any study of Islamic reform, discussion of its antithesis, i.e. Islamic traditionalism, is significant as the notion of Islamic reform results in part from a discontent stemming from the nature of Islamic traditionalism itself. Islamic traditionalism or conservatism is a tendency to cling to the traditional Islamic precepts, hold on to the old way of life and has a sceptical attitude towards Western influences. It maintains an allegiance to past methods and does not deal with the threat and attraction of the West. The traditionalists hold to the full authority of the past and resist changes that might affect the traditions of the past. Islamic traditionalism is closely associated with the *taqlīd* attitude which is blamed by the reformists as having been a cause of the decline of Muslim community. It is the desire to rectify this problem which mainly characterizes Islamic reform.

Islamic reformism is the most common term used to indicate the idea and movement of Islamic reform that has emerged throughout the history of the Islamic community. It is particularly used in referring to the pre-modern Islamic reform movements which emerged in the Muslim world before the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This includes the reform efforts pioneered by ʿUmar b. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz in the 8<sup>th</sup> century up to the

Wahhābī and Sanūsī reform movements in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Islamic modernism refers to the modern Islamic reform movements that swept the Islamic world in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which were led by Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muḥammad ʿAbduh and Rashīd Riḍā. The difference between pre-modern Islamic revivalism and Islamic modernism is that the former was primarily a response to an internal socio-moral decline of the community, whilst the latter was a response to both the internal weaknesses and the external political and religio-cultural threat of Western imperialism. Both however share common features and relate to each other. Islamic modernism is observed as a continuation of pre-modern reformism. While pressing the internal reform by practising *ijtihād*, Islamic modernism tends to reformulate Islamic values and principles to modern thought, and to integrate modern thought and institutions into Islam.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the spirit of Islamic reform continued to characterize the history of Islamic community. It appeared in the forms of Islamic neorevivalism or Islamic fundamentalism as represented by Ḥasan al-Bannā's Ikhwān Muslimūn and Abul A'la Mawdudi's Jama'at-i-Islami. They combined the worldview of pre-modern revivalism with the theory of modernism. For them, Islam is all-encompassing, but the emphasis is more on the legitimacy of the past solutions to modern problems. They acknowledged the internal weaknesses of the community and were critical of the West, but ready to adopt modern technology and accept change in a controlled fashion. Their influence was strong and spread in most Muslim countries, and their organizations have served as an example for others throughout much of the Muslim world.

Neomodernism is another type of Islamic reform that prevails in the current Islamic resurgence. Neomodernism distinguishes sharply between the principles and values of Islam's unchangeable revelation and the historically and socially conditioned institutions and practices that can be changed to meet contemporary needs. The neomodernists' rhetoric is not as critical of the West, and they are open to a selective process of assimilation. Though they have learned from the West, they remain Islamically oriented. They are committed to an Islamic modernization of society and

emphasize the concept of Islamization. In the contemporary Islamic world, it is Islamic neorevivalism or fundamentalism and Islamic neomodernism which dominate current Islamic reform. Though their approaches and methods might be different, they share the same principles, objectives and characteristics.

In changing circumstances and with different emphases Islamic reform has always involved a call for a return to the basic principles of Islam as presented in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah of the Prophet. In addressing the decline and socio-moral corruption of the Muslim community, Islamic reform believes that the cause of this decline is a departure from the true path of Islam, and the cure is a return to Islam in its original form as exemplified in the life of the Prophet, the Companions and the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*. It strongly emphasizes the need for *ijtihād* and denounces the *taqlīd* of past traditional doctrinal authorities. It promotes the practice of *ittibāʿ* and condemns the *ibtidāʿ*. It believes that the socio-moral revival requires political action as epitomized by *jihād*. In encountering modernity, Islamic reformism maintains the necessity of reviving the community by the reformulation of the Islamic heritage in the light of the contemporary world. It attempts to show the compatibility of Islam in meeting contemporary needs and accepts change to a limited degree. The revival of the Muslim community and its social transformation and modernization, it maintains, must be rooted in Islamic principles and values.

In Malaysia, the advent of Islamic reform in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century can be seen in the birth of the reformists' monthly periodical *Al-Imam* in 1906. The emergence of Islamic reform in Malaysia stemmed from various factors. This included discontent with the legacy of Islamic traditionalism, which from the reformists' viewpoint had failed in redressing the decline of the Malay Muslim community. In the eyes of the reformists, Islamic traditionalism, which was mainly characterized by Ṣūfism, had resulted in a limited role for Islam in traditional Malay society as it failed to get rid of the superstitious and un-Islamic elements of Malay beliefs and thought. The nature of Islamic traditionalism, which emphasized a strict and unquestioning allegiance to the legacy of the past in its doctrinal teachings was blamed as having contributed to the degeneration of the Malay Muslim *ummah*. The religious establishment who allied

with the secular Malay authority, had also failed, according to the reformists, to bring about the betterment and improvement of Malay society religiously, socially and politically. Colonialism was also blamed by them as a major culprit that had caused the stagnation of the Malay community, especially in economic and educational aspects.

Islamic reform in Malaya originated from the rise of Islamic reformism in the Middle East. The Malays' contact with the Middle East reformists during their academic sojourn and pilgrimage was the starting point of the spread of Islamic reformism in Malaysia. In the early stages, Islamic reformism in Malaya was propagated in the Malay masses through *Al-Imam* periodical. Serving as the reformists' official medium, the contents of *Al-Imam* were filled with the ideologies of reform and renewal. When the publication of *Al-Imam* was terminated, the ideas of reform continued to be disseminated by the reformists through other periodicals such as *Neracha*, *Al-Ikhwan* and *Saudara*. The establishment of *madrasah* institutions by the reformists also assisted the spread of Islamic reformism, though most of the *madrasahs* were later closed due to a shortage of funds.

The emergence of Islamic reformism in Malaysia resulted in a sharp conflict with its adversary, Islamic traditionalism. The conflict between the exponents of traditionalism, i.e the traditionalists, and the advocates of reformism, the reformists, which were better known as the *Kaum Tua* and *Kaum Muda* conflict, was the main characteristic of Malayan Islam until the 1930's. The conflict was mainly expressed in doctrinal and ritual controversies of varying substance. The root of the conflict revolved mainly around the authority and the use of reason. The reformists emphasized the urgent need for *ijtihād*, whilst the traditionalists upheld *taqlīd*. The conflict between the two groups was not only through the columns of newspapers and journals, but also prevailed at the village level, which then divided the village into two rival factions. The criticism, denouncement, and condemnation of each other led to the serious division of the Malay Muslim community, and had always went beyond the ethics of disagreement laid down by the *shar'ah*.



The growth of Islamic reformism in Malaysia began to stagnate after the 1930's as it was checked by various factors. Islamic reformism was seen as having failed to mobilize public support from the Malay community, and thus it failed in its struggle against the Islamic traditionalism which had dominated the community for centuries. Though Islamic reformism declined at the time, it left some positive impact on the history of the Malay Muslim community. It resulted in the emergence of a modern religious elite who actively attempted to rectify the backwardness of the Malay Muslim community. It was also an important force in awakening Malay political consciousness. It had successfully germinated the seeds of nationalism among the Malays through the idea of pan-Islam, though Malay nationalism itself eventually held back the growth of Islamic reformism in Malaya. The spirit of Islamic reformism, nonetheless, remained in the bodies and minds of certain figures, and flowed occasionally in the Malays' political struggles.

In the era after independence, Islamic reformism re-emerged in a scattered fashion in the Malay peninsula states, but conveyed by separate local groups. In the early 1970's Islamic reformism appeared in the shape of the *dakwah* movement, the movement that engendered the spread of Islamic resurgence in Malaysia. In general, Islamic resurgence in Malaysia was a cultural response to the rapid social and economic change which characterizes Malaysia's contemporary development, in which the political dimension has become crucial to Malay Muslims. The *dakwah* movement, put into motion by groups such as ABIM, PAS and JIM, were mainly influenced by the reform thought and ideas spread by the Ikhwān Muslimūn and the Jama'at-i-Islami. At this time, the Islamic reformism conveyed by the *dakwah* movement successfully mobilized support from the Malay Muslim masses. It has greatly contributed to a heightening of Islamic consciousness among Malays and has been a mainstream of religious thought within the community.

The strong demand from the *dakwah* movement for the establishment of more Islamic institutions in the country and the greater Islamic identity of the Malay community has created pressure on the Malaysian government to adopt policies and strategies which are supportive of Islam. Under its Islamization policy, the government

has implemented various Islamic programmes, from the inculcation of an Islamic values in the government administration to the establishment of Islamic banking and financial system. Though the government has provided no official blueprint for its Islamization policy, it seems to be committed to the policy. Despite frequent criticisms, the government has proved that its Islamization policy has brought about a positive benefit to the Malay Muslim *ummah*. Furthermore, the government itself is seen as having contributed much to the development of Islamic resurgence as well as to the growth of Islamic reformism in Malaysia.

*‘Ibādah*, the act or rites of worshipping God, has been one of the subjects of conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists. Though in the Islamic literature *‘ibādah* is defined by scholars in various ways, in general it denotes obedience and ultimate submission to God. In this study the term *‘ibādah* has been used to mean the ordinances of divine worship, i.e. the specific prescribed rites by which mankind expresses his creatureliness, submissiveness and obedience to God, such as prayer (*ṣalāh*), almsgiving (*zakāh*), fasting (*ṣawm*) and pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). *‘Ibādah* from Islamic perspective is regarded as the most important duty of man towards God, and it is in fact a sole purpose of the creation of mankind. This duty is frequently mentioned in the Qur’ān and constitutes the fundamental principle of the teachings of Islam.

Throughout the twenty-three years of his prophethood, the Prophet Muḥammad, inspired by God, established a specific practical system of *‘ibādah* which constitutes an integral part of the basic Islamic system as found in the Qur’ān and the Sunnah. The establishment of a practical system of *‘ibādah* by the Prophet Muḥammad had some of its origins in the rites of worship that prevailed in the period of Jāhiliyyah. These rites were, in fact, some of the remnants of the Abrahamic legacies that had been corrupted over the course of time. Thus, some forms of *‘ibādah* prevailing in the era of Jāhiliyyah such as fasting, pilgrimage, charity and sacrifice were preserved and revitalized by Islam with some modifications and corrections. At the same time, Islam had rejected and eradicated various erroneous forms of worship in the Jāhiliyyah period, especially the prevalent idolatrous worship, and taught the

proper ways of worshipping God.

As the main purpose of the creation of human beings, *‘ibādah* has its own system and method established in Islam as the right approach of man to God. There are four basic obligatory *‘ibādah* which constitute the pillars of Islam, namely prayer (*ṣalāh*), almsgiving (*zakāh*), fasting (*ṣawm*) in the month of Ramaḍān and pilgrimage (*ḥajj*). Islam has also prescribed the supererogatory *‘ibādah* of varying substances which include various forms of prayer, fasting, charity, supplication and remembrance. There are specific rules, pre-requisites, principles and manners of practice for each of these obligatory and supererogatory *‘ibādah* which has been laid down in Islamic jurisprudence. It is these particular areas that have been a significant part of the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in Malaysia.

The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in matters of *‘ibādah* starts right from the first pillar of Islam, i.e. the profession of faith (*shahādah*). The profession of faith is not really an act of *‘ibādah*, but it is a pre-requisite of all acts of *‘ibādah* in Islam. The conflict between the two parties in the profession of faith revolves around their approaches in appreciating the two phrases of the profession. The traditionalists emphasize on the doctrine of the Twenty Attributes of God and the Three Qualities of the Messenger as taught by al-Sanūsī in his *Umm al-Barāhīn*. While criticizing the traditionalists' method in appreciating the *shahadah* as leading to confusion, the reformists lay emphasis on the teaching of the Oneness of God (*tawḥīd*) as appears in the writings of the *salafiyyah*.

The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in *‘ibādah* is much seen in the prayer and matters relating to it. In the matter of *wuḍū’* (ablution), their disputes occur mainly on the question of its nullity by touching the skin of a person of the opposite sex, the question of touching the Qur’ān without being in *wuḍū’*, and some invocations recited while doing *wuḍū’*. In the matter of *adhān*, the dispute is on the question whether the chanting of certain supplications before calling the *adhān* is permissible or not. In performing the prayer, the disagreement between the two parties revolves mainly on the issues of the utterance of the intention of prayer,

pronouncing the *basmalah* before reciting the *sūrat al-Fātiḥah*, recitation of *qunūt* supplication in the Fajr prayer. The issue of reciting certain *dhikrs* and *duʿā's* after the prayer finishes is also a subject of disagreement between them, in which the traditionalists prefer to do it by chanting them loudly together, whilst the reformists prefer otherwise, i.e. inaudibly and individually. In the Friday prayer, they are in dispute on matters regarding calling the *adhān* twice, performing the *sunnah qabliyyah* prayer after the first *adhān*, reciting the *tarqiyah* by the *muadhdhin*, and chanting the blessing upon the Prophet between two *khuṭbahs*. The traditionalists, in each case, base their viewpoint on the judgement determined by the jurists of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*, whereas the reformists emphasize a strict adherence to the rules which are indicated by the Sunnah of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Companions and the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*.

In the matters regarding fasting during Ramaḍān, the conflict occurs on the issue of using *ru'yah* and *ḥisāb* methods in confirming the beginning of Ramaḍān. In this case, the traditionalists hold to using *ru'yah* as a fixed rule and disapprove of using astronomical calculation in determining the beginning of Ramaḍān. The reformists, however, maintain that if *ru'yah* fails, astronomical calculations can be used to determine it. Though both insist on their own standpoints and arguments, the traditionalists in recent developments have tended to adopt the reformists' stance, since astronomical calculation is generally acceptable for its accuracy, and is therefore widely used in determining prayer times and in other matters. The *tarāwīḥ* prayer has also been a subject of dispute between them. The dispute occurs when the traditionalists specify certain verses to be recited in the prayer, whilst the reformists denounce such a designation as *bidʿah*. The chanting of certain *dhikrs* and blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad in between the *tarāwīḥ* prayers which has been an accustomed practice of the traditionalists is also denounced by the reformists as it was neither practiced at the time of the Prophet Muḥammad, the Companions and the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, nor it was acknowledged by any *imāms* of the four *madhhab*.

Concerning *zakāh*, the major dispute between the traditionalists and the reformists has been on its resources, which revolves around the question of whether



the *zakāh* resources should be expanded or not. The traditionalists' standpoint is that the *zakāh* resources should be limited to the six types of property which are specified in the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, namely, farm animals; crops, i.e. grains and fruits that can be stored as food; cash; buried treasure; gold and silver; and business commodities. The reformists view that the *zakāh* resources should not be restricted to those specific traditional resources, but should be expanded to include other kinds of wealth, taking into account contemporary developments and changes. This would include contemporary resources of wealth such as various plantation products, fisheries, a variety of industries, shares, wages, salaries or income of professional groups. Their standpoint, which mainly resembles the viewpoints of the Ḥanafī *madhhab*, is based on several *shar'ah* principles, including the principles of *maṣlaḥah* and *ʿadālah*. Some of the reformist standpoints regarding this issue seem to be acceptable, as some states have introduced the imposition of *zakāh* on the monthly salary and professional income on Muslims.

In matters to do with performing the pilgrimage, the traditionalists and the reformists are in conflict with regard to the issues of making the intention for *ḥajj* on the appointed location (*mīqāt*) and the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* for the *qārin*. In the first issue, the traditionalists perceive that making the intention can be done at Dhū al-Ḥulayfah, an appointed location for those who come from Madinah, as they come to Madinah first before going to Makkah. The reformists denounce this practice saying that making the intention must be done at Qarn al-Manāzil, an appointed location for those who come from the east. For them, those who go to Madinah first and make the intention for *ḥajj* at Dhū al-Ḥulayfah are liable for *dam*. In the second issue, some reformists hold that it is sufficient for the *qārin* to perform only one obligatory *ṭawāf* which is done upon their arrival in Makkah, whilst the traditionalists maintain that it should be done after the *wuqūf*, i.e. on the day of sacrifice (10<sup>th</sup> of Dhū al-Ḥijjah). These issues were raised when a group of reformists who travelled for *ḥajj* in 1987 performed the *ṭawāf* upon their arrival in Makkah and did not perform the *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* on the day of sacrifice. This practice was severely condemned by the traditionalists, and a *fatwā* was issued saying that the those pilgrims had not



completed their *ḥajj* unless they performed the *ṭawāf al-ifādah* again after the *wuqūf*, and if they did not perform before they died, their *ḥajj* would be void. The reformists challenged the *fatwā* and propounded various textual proofs and jurists' views supporting their standpoint, but failed to convince the traditionalists, and thus the *fatwā* has not been retracted.

The conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists also arises over some questions relating to the deceased, particularly regarding the issues of performing the *talqīn* after the burial, and the question of whether contributing the reward to the deceased in various ways such as *tahlīl* ceremony and *kenduri arwah* will benefit him or not. On most of these questions, the traditionalists' standpoint, though based on several arguments, seems to be in contrast to the definite standpoint of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, to which they belong. Compared to the traditionalists' viewpoint, the reformists' stance, which denounces the traditionalists' practice of *talqīn*, *tahlīl*, *kenduri arwah* and contributing to the reward of the deceased, seems to be in favour of the standpoint of the Shāfi'ī *madhhab*, although they do not belong to it. In that case, the traditionalists' attitude, in the eye of the reformists, is questionable as they claim that they are loyal adherents of al-Shāfi'ī but they neglect his clear standpoint in these issues, and instead, hold to the very weak opinion in the *madhhab*.

Though the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists over the matters of *ʿibādah* seems, on the one hand, to resemble that of the typical juristic differences, on the other, it is a result of disputation concerning some principles which form the ideology of Islamic reformism. In analysing the conflict, several reasons have been identified as the major cause of the conflict. One of the major reasons for the conflict is their different judgements concerning the question of *bidʿah*. It is known that Islamic reformism in its calls for a return to the pristine Islam has denounced *bidʿah* as the main cause of the community's deviation from the straight path. According to the reformists' view and arguments, something innovated in the religion after it had been completely taught by the Prophet is regarded as blameworthy *bidʿah*. This refers to the fundamentals of the religion which have been

fixed in detail (*thawābit*), namely matters regarding faith (*‘aqīdah*) and ritual form of *‘ibādah*. Newly innovated things that concern mundane affairs, i.e. non-fundamental aspects of the religion such as matters of *mu‘āmalāt* and *‘ādāt*, are not considered *bid‘ah* as they are changeable matters (*mutaghayyirāt*) that depend greatly on changes of public interest (*maṣlahah*). To them, all *bid‘ahs* are erroneous (*ḍalālāh*) and have a bad connotation in the religion. For them, most of the traditionalists’ practice on the disputed issues involves *bid‘ah*, i.e. something which deviates from the true practice of Islam taught by the Prophet Muḥammad. The traditionalists however perceive that all *bid‘ah* is not necessarily bad, and there is good *bid‘ah* which they term *bid‘ah ḥasanah*. For them, erroneous *bid‘ah* is something that contradicts the principles of religion. The traditionalists maintain that their practices which have been accused by the reformists as *bid‘ah*, as a matter of fact, fall into the category of *bid‘ah ḥasanah*. Some of the traditionalists’ idea of *bid‘ah ḥasanah* also overlaps with the reformists’ idea of *maṣlahah*. As both parties insist on their own perceptions, the conflict remains unresolved.

The issue regarding the concept of *taqlīd* of a *madhhab* has also been an important cause of the conflict. The *taqlīd* phenomenon is rooted deeply in Malay society since it was strongly preserved by the traditionalists through the *pondok* educational system, which, especially in the teaching of *fiqh*, emphasized on strict imitation and exclusive adherence to the Shāfi‘ī *madhhab*. The traditionalists perceive *taqlīd* as permissible, even obligatory for those who are incapable of practising *ijtihād*. For them, textual evidence denotes that less well-informed Muslims should have recourse to qualified experts, i.e. to practise *taqlīd*. Given the depth of scholarship that is needed to understand the revealed texts accurately, and the extreme warnings given against distorting the revelation, it is obvious to the traditionalists that ordinary Muslims are duty bound to follow expert opinion rather than rely on their own limited reasoning and knowledge. On the contrary, the reformists strongly denounce *taqlīd* as, for them, it is a passive way of practising the religion, and likely to be a cause of error which leads to fanaticism and division within the Muslim *ummah*. In their eyes, *taqlīd* would confine Muslims to relying on the

classical and medieval interpretations of Islam which are not applicable to the modern problems of Muslims. Such interpretations themselves are susceptible to error because of human limitations or because new evidence might arise. They instead encourage the exercise of *ijtihād* in order to produce fresh interpretations of Islam to demonstrate its relevancy and validity in modern Muslim life. Those who are not capable of exercising *ijtihād* should to practise *ittibāʿ*. *Ittibāʿ* is considered by them as a positive way in following of the *madhhab* and an attempt to reach authenticity, while *taqlīd* is merely a blind imitation, which will finally lead to perpetrating the *bidʿah*, as seen in various traditionalists' religious practices.

The traditionalists' hold to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* solely, and their attitude of being reluctant to adapt the laws of other *madhhabs* has also resulted in the conflict. Though some traditionalists approve the practice of *talfīz*, the great majority of them reject it and strongly defend their loyalty solely to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab*. This attitude is not surprising as they live in a milieu where the teachings of the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* are deeply entrenched whilst the teachings of other *madhhabs* are extremely alien. The traditionalists believe that holding to the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* is a sacrosanct tradition which preserves the unity and stability of the Malay Muslim community, whereas adopting the teachings of other *madhhabs* will lead to confusion and affect the solidarity of the community. Contrary to the traditionalists' belief, the reformists perceive that it is binding oneself to a specific *madhhab* that leads to disunity of the community as it causes fanaticism among its followers. History has witnessed, according to the reformists, a chronic problem of fanaticism of *madhhab* among the Muslim community for a long time, which has finally resulted in disputes and rampant discord among their followers. Since they believe that the truth exists in all the *madhhabs*, the reformists do not confine themselves to any specific *madhhab*. They propagate the idea of borderless *fiqh*, an eclectic approach that resembles *talfīz*, i.e. by analyzing the views of all the *madhhabs* on specific questions, and choosing the best ones through the method of *tarjīh*.

In a broader perspective, the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists in matters of *ʿibādah* can also be classified into two main categories: The

first category is the conflicts that occur as a result of juristic or *madhhab* differences; while the second category is the conflicts that resulted from local custom differences. From twenty examples of disputed matters propounded in the Chapter 4, 13 of them fall in the first category while 7 of them are in the second category. A brief statistical information on this categorization is shown in the table below.

Subject Disputed	Juristic/ <i>Madhhab</i> Difference	Local Custom Difference
<i>Shahādah</i>	✓	
Nullity of <i>wuḍūʾ</i>	✓	
Recitation of certain prayers before <i>adhān</i>		✓
Utterance of intention	✓	
Pronouncing <i>basmalah</i> before <i>sūrat al-Fātiḥah</i>	✓	
Recitation of <i>qunūt</i> in the Fajr prayer	✓	
Chanting <i>dhikrs</i> and <i>duʿāʾ</i> after the prayer		✓
Doing the <i>adhān</i> twice on Friday prayer	✓	
Two <i>raḳʿah</i> of <i>sunnah qabliyyah</i> on Friday prayer	✓	
Expansion of <i>zakāh</i> resources	✓	
<i>Zakāh</i> of agricultural produce	✓	
<i>Zakāh</i> of monthly salary	✓	
Using <i>ruʾyah</i> and <i>ḥisāb</i> in confirming the beginning of Ramaḍān	✓	
Recitation of certain <i>sūrahs</i> in <i>tarāwīḥ</i> prayers		✓
Chanting <i>dhikrs</i> and <i>ṣalawāt</i> between <i>tarāwīḥ</i> prayers		✓
Changing of <i>mīqāt makānī</i>	✓	
<i>Ṭawāf al-ifāḍah</i> for the Qārin	✓	
<i>Talqīn</i> after burial		✓
Making up the deceased’s missed obligatory actions		✓
<i>Tahlīl</i> ceremony and <i>kenduri arwah</i>		✓

It is seen from above statistics that the disputes between the traditionalists and the reformists over the matters of *‘ibādah* are mainly juristic. When disputes are of the juristic ones, the reformists always tend to choose the strongest standpoint among the *madhhabs* by using the method of *tarjih*. However, sometimes, a small group of them adopt a weak viewpoint among the *madhhabs* such as in the issue of *ṭawāf al-ifāḍah* for the *qārin*. This seems to be unfamiliar attitude of the reformists, but they considered it as acceptable as long as it has a basis in the primary textual evidence.

The disputes between the traditionalists and the reformists, though mainly concerning juristic matters which are part of the branches of the religion, have frequently exceeded the limits as they show a non-compromising attitude against each other. Both parties seem to have a serious lack of tolerance in experiencing opposing standpoints to each other. The antagonism between them has gone so far as to label their opponents as heretics, misguided and even disbelievers. Both parties might be aware that they are only disputing over non-fundamental issues of the religion, but astonishingly, they tend to show their enmity towards each other which thus splits up Islamic brotherhood among them. This has resulted in serious division of the Malay Muslim community. Though efforts of reconciliation have been made, they have frequently ended without any solution. As both parties seem to have a thick prejudice and harsh attitude against each other, the conflict becomes worse and leaves the Malay community in schism.

In spite of its direct negative effects, the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists on issues of *‘ibādah* has engendered some positive impact for the Malay Muslim community. In the long run, the conflict has gradually transformed the traditional perception of *‘ibādah* among the Malay Muslim community. As a result, some practices of *‘ibādah* which used to be practised in their traditional ways, have been purified and practised in their original form as taught by the Prophet. The perceptual change has also developed the teaching of *fiqh* in the Malaysian education system. The teaching of *fiqh* in Malaysia, especially at the higher learning level, is no



longer based on the Shāfiʿī *madhhab* solely as it was before, but now adopts the reformist' concept of borderless *fiqh*, i.e. by referring to all leading *madhhabs* and choosing the best ones. This has broken the domination of Shāfiʿism in the Malaysian teaching of *fiqh* and transformed the traditional outlook of the Shāfiʿi-based *fiqh* to an eclectic *fiqh*.

The change has also been an indicator of the beginning of the decline of Islamic traditionalism. The traditionalists are seen, to some extent, as having approved and adopted some ideas of reform, especially with regard to the issues of *ijtihād*, *talfīz* and *maṣlaḥah*. The decline of Islamic traditionalism and its changing attitude has led to the emergence of a new group of Muslims, namely the neo-traditionalists. The reformists have also experienced some changes of attitude. They were known before as having a harsh attitude towards their antagonists, but now they are seen to be more courteous and compromising in promoting their reform ideas. They actively attempt to adopt the moderate approaches as outlined by the Ikhwān Muslimūn, who are regarded as the most successful reform group for their moderate attitudes in propagating the ideas of Islamic reform. These changes have brought new hope for reducing the conflict between the two parties, in the long run, to a minimum level, but in the very near future this might be impossible.

Throughout its existence in Malaysia for over a century, Islamic reformism has passed through various experiences. Though it was strongly challenged by Islamic traditionalism from the early days of its emergence, it has eventually been accepted by the Malay masses. Though the previous reformists did not leave any detailed blueprint for Islamic reform, they have left a strong foundation for the later generation to resume their reform efforts, and this has been realized by the birth of various reform-oriented *dakwah* groups who intensively promote Islamic reformism in more organized frameworks. The ideas of Islamic reform have thus spread, and been accepted and advocated by most Malays, especially the youth and the intelligentsia. As regards the Islamic traditionalism, even if it is said to be declining, has secured its influence among its traditional stronghold of the religious establishment, Ṣufī groups and peasant society. Islamic reformism may be seen as an important force which is

responsible for shaping the future course of Malaysian Islam, but traditionalism will presumably continue its challenge to the former. Thus, it is predicted that the conflict between them is unlikely to be resolved.

As the conflict between the traditionalists and the reformists is predicted to persist in the future, it is suggested that they should manage it wisely to avoid schism and disunity among the Malay Muslim community. Disagreement is part of life, but it will turn into serious problem if it is unwisely managed. The conflict over issues of *‘ibādah*, which is mainly juristic, should have not been a reason for the division of Malay Muslims. It is suggested that the traditionalists and the reformists to learn and practise the ethics of disagreement as demonstrated by the Companions of the Prophet and the great jurists among the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ* who showed great tolerance to each other in managing their disagreements. Though completely eliminating the conflict between them seems impossible, it should be managed by holding to the ethics of disagreement in order to preserve the solidarity of the *ummah*. The Ikhwān’s principle of “to co-operate on where there is agreement and to excuse each other where there is disagreement,” is useful to be a basic formula of reconciliation between the traditionalists and the reformists.

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\*This bibliography adopts the bibliography system used by The Library of Congress in which the Malay names appear in their first names first followed by their surnames (e.g. Amran Kasimin, not Kasimin, Amran), with exception to those who are known to have Arab origins (such as al-Attas, Syed Muhammad Naguib, not Syed Muhammad Naguib al-Attas).

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